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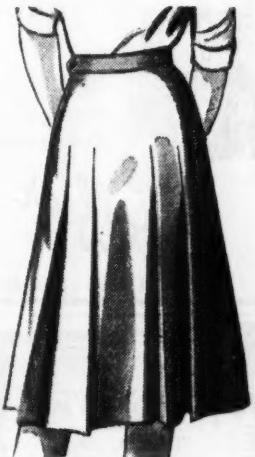
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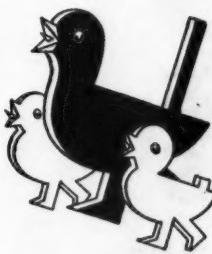
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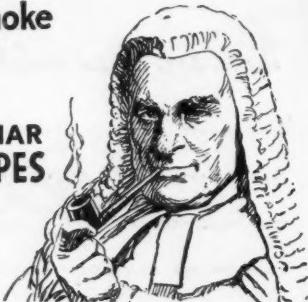
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Also PETROL LIGHTERS & POUCHES
Orlik wind-proof Petrol Lighters give a sure light for cigarette or pipe, indoors or out. Orlik Pouches in a variety of styles.



When the boys
are all back
we'll again have

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QUALITY SHIRT
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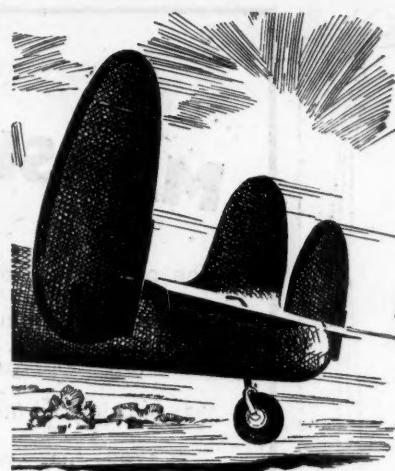


With the easing of official priorities, our pumps, with the accumulated improvements of 6 years, are again being made for normal trading. Deliveries, for so long a dream of the Never-neverland, are far from adequate—but are real enough to justify reversing the nursery plumstone jingle. "This year" at least sees a beginning.

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B·O·A·C

BRITISH OVERSEAS AIRWAYS CORPORATION



" . . . the affinity of ferrous metals for oxygen, old man . . . "

Modern youth knows more than Shakespeare even dreamed on. But just in case your small son isn't in a communicative mood, we'll briefly explain the principles of cutting iron and steel with oxygen. It is a chemical process based on the fact that white hot iron has an extreme affinity for oxygen and oxidizes very rapidly. So the oxygen flame-cutter first heats that part of the surface to be cut and then directs on to it a high pressure jet of oxygen. The oxygen and hot iron combine to form an oxide (our old enemy rust), and the jet blows the rust away in a shimmer of sparks. The oxygen flame-cutter, in effect, 'rusts' away the metal in a matter of seconds—an age-old natural process incredibly speeded-up by modern science.

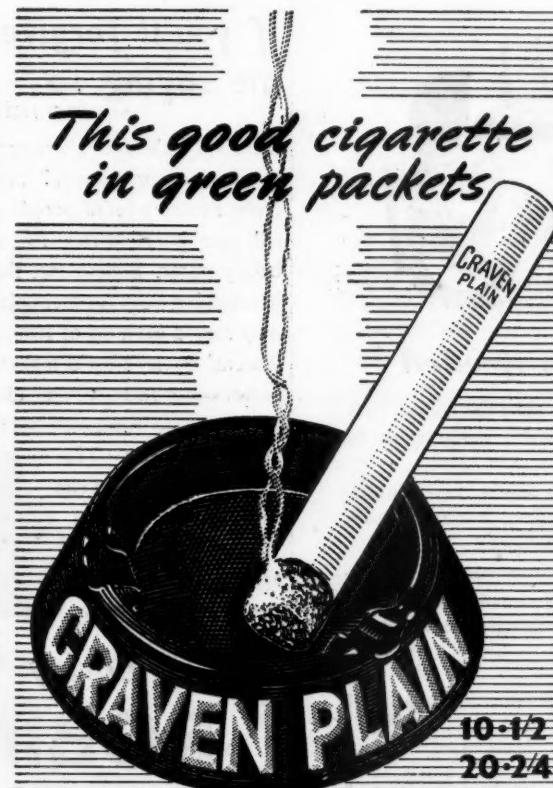


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25/- per bottle.



The Best
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SYMONS'
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is perfection
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Derby day in the 'seventies—when young men of fortune and fashion set off for Epsom Downs in gigs, broughams, coaches and even four horse drays. What matter if the fortunes of the field went against them? There was always consolation to be found in the ample hamper packed with cold chicken, veal and ham pies, cherry tarts—and, of course, Romary biscuits. And how lucky we are today, when the pleasures of famous events can be made complete with *Romary's Wheaten Biscuits*—Ginger Nuts and Honey Bake.

ROMARY
'Tunbridge Wells' Biscuits



Why your help is needed

It is not surprising that from an army of four and a half millions there should come many cases of human hardship that cannot be met by Government relief schemes.

The Army Benevolent Fund, by grants to suitable service institutions, helps to provide the financial assistance that thousands of such people so sorely need. It looks to you for the means.

It would be an affront to the dignity of men, women and children who are suffering—and to your own—to appeal to your pity in this matter. Please give us all you can, out of a simple sense of gratitude for "services rendered."

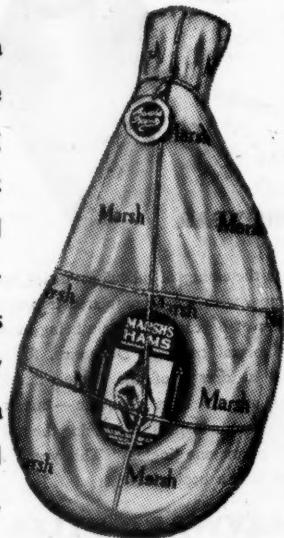
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FUND** THE KING
PATRON: H.M.

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● The preparation of a Marsh Ham is quite the most appetising way of using the meat—as you may well believe from its delicious taste. Just as soon as the Ministry of Food permit such a luxury again, you shall have it. All is ready.

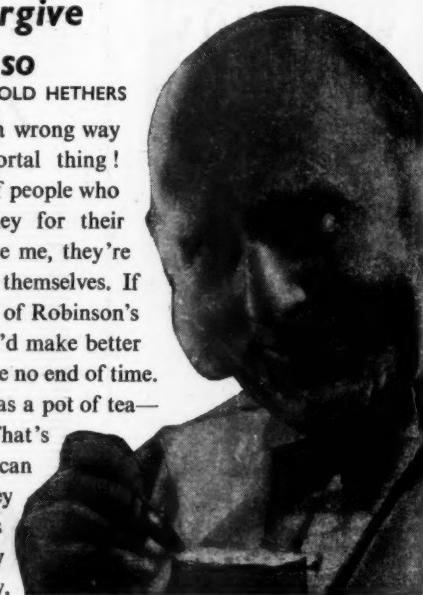


MARSH & BAXTER LTD., BRIERLEY HILL

If you'll forgive
me saying so

says OLD HETHERS

there's a right and a wrong way of doing every mortal thing! Now, I know a lot of people who still use pearl barley for their barley water. Believe me, they're just making work for themselves. If only they'd get a tin of Robinson's 'Patent' Barley they'd make better barley water and save no end of time. It's as easy to make as a pot of tea—with Robinson's. That's what I'm using till I can get Robinson's Barley Water in bottles again. And if I may say so, I should know.



Barley Water from
ROBINSON'S
'PATENT' BARLEY



PUNCH

Or
The London Charivari



Vol. CCX No. 5501

June 5 1946

Charivaria

"THE Indian cricketer may prove a better man than the Englishman on a very dry wicket," says a sporting writer. It was under similar conditions, it will be remembered, that Gunga Din scored.

A small island in the South Pacific disappears periodically beneath the water. The organizers of the U.S. atom bomb test are disregarding it in favour of one that won't duck.

British railways no longer keep booking-office clocks a few minutes fast. Otherwise the Government might, on assuming control, be cheated of a few trains.



Coke Scandal

"The Minister of Fuel and Power had some heated passages . . ." *B.B.C. News Bulletin*.

A Keen Collector

"The four-millionth telephone was installed yesterday in the office of the chairman of the London County Council."—*Daily paper*.

A London waiter says the best tip he ever had was from a Scotsman. He doesn't say, however, what price it came in at.



It is suggested that apples should not be used for cider-making this year but should be sold to the public instead. Wouldn't that be interfering with the freedom of the press?

Mr. Shinwell, speaking at Wakefield, said he doubted whether we could ever return to the days when coal was sold at rock-bottom prices. What concerns us more is how long rock will continue to be sold at top coal prices.

"It was like the good old days to see sparrows at Lord's eating crumbs from spectators' sandwiches during the luncheon interval," says a correspondent.

Robins, too, on this occasion added to the enjoyment of a bright day's cricket.

An Essex man drove a burglar out of the house with a golf club and a passing policeman arrested the intruder. It was decided to call it a half.

"Mr. Justice Hallett said he was satisfied that the fire was caused by a sparp or sparga . . ."—*Manchester paper*.

Or even a spark could have done it.

A cargo of live lobsters was recently flown from Oslo to Amsterdam. We understand several passengers complained of a distinct nip in the air.

That horses have more sense than human beings is shown by the fact that they were scared stiff of motor-cars in the days when pedestrians were laughing at them.



Mechanization

(Written to help my aunt on June 8th)

THIS is the Rumble Past of War Machines
And I intend to make myself your guide,
Explaining what a Modern Army means,
And how it works, and what it does inside.

This is a kind of Tower upon a Float,
This is an Instrument for Cooking Meals,
This is an Object of Peculiar Note.
It runs on Petrol. It has Curious Wheels.

This is a Boat that rides upon the Land,
This is a Cart that swims upon the Sea,
This is—no, this I do not understand,
This is a perfect mystery to me.

This is the sort of thing that Did the Job;
Devised by Experts, it fulfilled its aim:
I should describe it as a thingummy-bob,
I cannot recollect its actual name.

This is a—dammit, what I said before,
A large arrangement suitably designed
To serve its purpose in the Hour of War
And pull the other thing which comes behind.

This is a sort of Elemental Hoe
That is a kind of Superhuman Crane,
And not a single person seems to know
If any of them will be used again. EVOE.

○ ○

Brains

IN writing about brains I know I am dealing with a rather delicate subject. I don't want to abash those of my readers who think themselves not very clever and are already wondering how they are going to be got at this time. Still less do I want to encourage the opposite side—already bridling self-consciously in the belief that it is about to confirm its opinion of itself. I think the fairest method of approach is to tell both sides what I heard on the wireless the other day. It was a scientist saying that there is not nearly as much difference between people's and other people's brains as between the brains of people, the whole lot of them, and animals, the whole lot of *them*. Let my readers ponder on this and stop nagging. Statisticians, by the way, support the statement eagerly; saying that the cleverest animals cannot do the simplest sum, while it is known that the stupidest humans can because the simplest sum is a sum that even the stupidest humans can do. Statistics, they add, reveal also that the cleverest thing most animals can do is tell when a meal is late, which is about the least clever thing most humans can do. Talking of animals' brains, I wonder if my readers read a recent newspaper article about dogs having none whatever, and if the dog-owners noticed that they were reacting like dog-owners, or if they just reacted like dog-owners?

Even if animals do not have what humans mean by

brains, it cannot be denied that different animals have different mental set-ups which give them the effect of character, if not always exactly of intelligence. My readers have all met those black, bushy Scotch terriers with tartan collars, a clockwork gait and a certain wildness of eye which may be due to the surrounding hair but, it would be nicer to think, means something, however little. No one can see such a dog, temporarily anchored by a stationary owner and watching each passer-by through its arc of vision, without thinking that here is an attitude to life paralleled only by the men who run the funny columns in the daily papers. Cats, on the other hand—I am sorry to have to say it—have no attitude to life, or not one they could put in writing. They do have a predetermined slant on the world, which they think little of, and a boundless self-confidence and a huge appetite. With such equipment and their habit of shutting their eyes when not thinking, they have long fooled the public. Mice are more difficult to sum up because, with all their film publicity, they cannot hope to be more than a pale imitation of themselves; but it is safe to say that mice are wary and persevering and are not so single-minded about cheese as tradition used to think. Bees and ants are either so clever that they are stupid or the other way round. As for hens, I need only remind those of my readers who have ever tried to show a hen out of a wire-netting enclosure how they felt as they watched the hen scurrying to and fro past the open door in its efforts to find a hole in the netting the same size as all the other holes. Hen-owners are unique, or the opposite of dog-owners, in that they are the first to tell you their pets are stupid, and hens are the opposite of dogs in that no one loves them more than they deserve.

I seem to have used a lot of space on animals, but it will have been worth while if it has sent even the least arrogant of my readers back where they belong, at the top of creation. Now let us consider human brains, and their place in the life of mankind. Brains being, as the scientist was saying, what distinguishes mankind from animals, it is only natural that mankind should be expected to begin using its brains very early on. Indeed, it starts running them in long before it can remember, I mean before it can remember afterwards. During this running-in period mankind bangs bricks together, hammers pegs into boards and gets through a number of other small tasks which, without appearing to onlookers to cut much mental ice, somehow get it to the point when it is called on to perform a feat of brain-power known off-handedly enough as *learning to talk*. Learning to talk seems so impossible to people thinking about it in later life that all they can conclude is that they were lucky to learn then, when they could. Second only to talking comes learning to read. How many of my readers would care to take that on again, or embark on that long, slow process known as school?

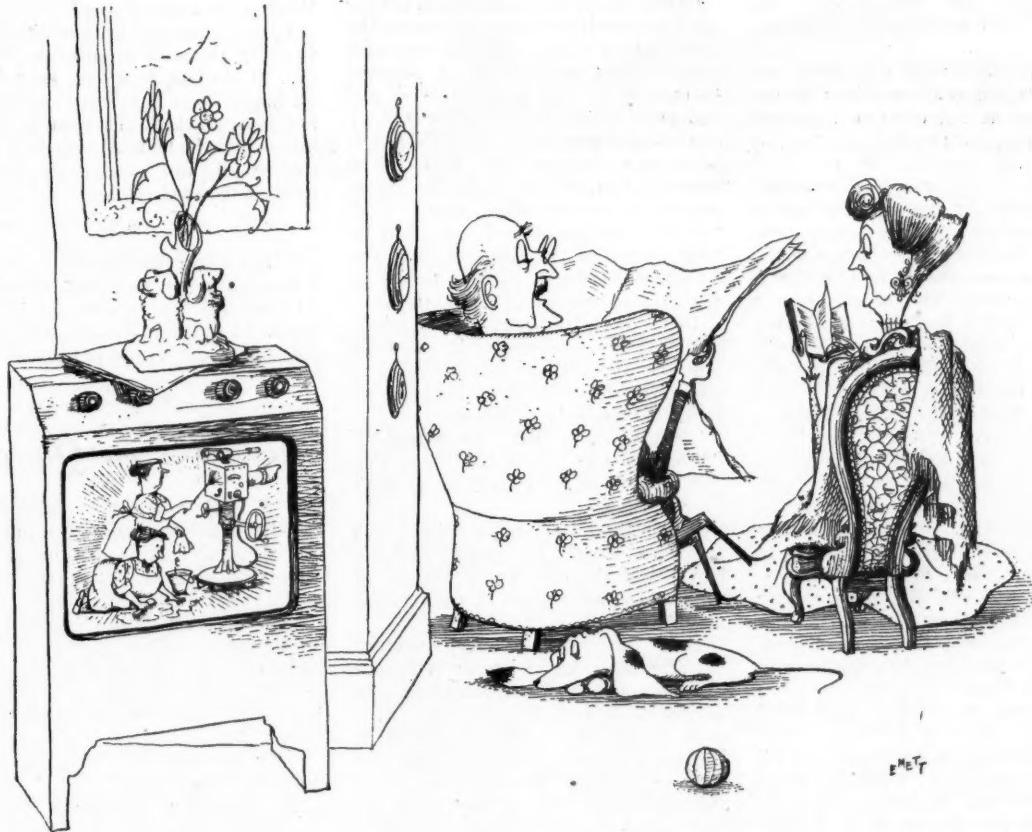
There is much talk nowadays about doing away with school examinations, or anyway, making them different from the ones my readers experienced, and I expect my readers took this as they have in the past taken the news of other educational reforms—ungrudgingly, but with a feeling that they themselves are rather a tribute to the old hard days. Tribute or not, most of them will remember that examinations were some of the main features of their school careers; even though their actual memories of these occasions may have got overlaid with those dreams where they are sitting in the Crystal Palace waiting for the history papers to be handed out, or have passed some important examination without going in for it, or even (so wayward is the dream-mind) done one sum of an arithmetic paper and found it right when they woke up. It

is small wonder that most people cannot recall honestly what they felt about school examinations, beyond that sensation of wondering afterwards how they got so many marks. What is surprising is to find an old examination paper and realize that once we knew, or did not know, all those questions; especially the contexts in the English literature papers. How many of my readers could write notes nowadays on the average quotation from *Macbeth*? About the only examination question most of us could tackle nowadays is an essay on some nice abstract subject, with doubts that now we might do it too well.

My readers may be thinking that all this about examinations is not strictly to do with brains, because people take examinations, anyway to start with, whether they have brains or not. This is, indeed, the point about education generally. While we are undergoing education, whether we have much brain or little, we have to use that brain to a quite startling degree, or so it seems looking at it from here. I mentioned the *Macbeth* contexts, but these are only one branch of the information we come by. At some time in our lives we had in our heads the nature of isobars, the cross-section of a buttercup, the inside dope on the Thirty Years' War, how to measure the width of a stream by the height of a tree, who Jenkins's ear was, and what causes fog. My readers will now be expecting me to tell them that what separates clever people from unclever people is the ability to go on remembering this in later

life; but psychologists say this is not necessarily so. They say the clever people are the ones who know they knew a thing once and worry their friends by trying to remember it when it comes up in conversation, and the unclever people are the ones who have renounced their claim to this sort of fact and are now concentrating quietly on answering their letters and getting their shoes mended.

I haven't left much space to say anything about brains in adult life, but all I really want to say is that people tend to divide themselves into highbrows and lowbrows and thereafter to transfer their allegiance either very openly or very stealthily; but the whole question is rather relative, and many a highbrow has gone temporarily tough on meeting an even higher level of culture. (I don't want my readers to think I am confusing culture with brains, but I don't want either to sort the two out at the moment.) And finally, since I am talking of highbrow, I must mention those weekly reviews and their effect on ordinary readers. By ordinary readers I mean people who read them regularly but are not otherwise any different from ordinary people. The effect of such reviews on such people is twofold and may be defined as a realization that if they are not as clever as they should be then they are still quite clever, and quite happy, and a suspicion that leaving out the commas they themselves would have put in, especially all those times before the word "who," is either very clever indeed or something they should point out to the editor.



"Shouldn't be surprised if the television studio started up any day now."

I Meet Marcus

"MARCUS comes home tomorrow evening for the Victory celebrations," said Nora.

Marcus, aged ten, is her nephew. I have never liked him much.

"Peggy can't get to Paddington to meet him," continued Nora. "She wonders if you could do that for her. She'll be waiting for you both under the clock at Charing Cross. His train gets in at five-ten."

It seemed a small enough contribution to make to a national event, although it did occur to me that Marcus, for his part, was not leaving peak-hour travel to workers.

Marcus arrived on a train which disgorged its contents like a sausage bursting in the frying-pan. In the midst of it all was Marcus. He had an enormous suitcase. We began to make our way towards the barrier among about two thousand people charged with the same idea.

"I say," said Marcus over his shoulder. "We went to see a smashing film."

"If you could walk a little to one side," I murmured, conscious of the fact that many of the two thousand were pushing me from behind, "or else get along a bit faster . . ."

"About a chap who had a wizard horse," continued Marcus, oblivious to my suggestions. "Its name was Stanley. No, hang on. That was the brother's name—the fellow's brother's, not the horse's. The brother had a horse too, but I don't know whether the brother's horse was the brother of the horse of the fellow who had the brother. His name was Hank. Did I tell you that? The fellow, I mean; not the brother. *His* was Sam."

It was a complicated situation to grasp while I was stumbling along with a kind of syncopated action between Marcus, who was not in a hurry and on whom I did not wish to tread, and a mass of forceful people who were and who did not seem to mind treading on me.

By the time we reached the barrier Hank (or maybe Sam) was in the toils for the first time.

"Have you your ticket ready?" I asked.

". . . whacking at his knuckles with a socking great gun while he hung from a cliff like this," said Marcus, stopping in the middle of the barrier and stretching up his arms by way of demonstration.

His ticket was immediately brushed

from his hand. The crowd surged over our heads as we both dived for it, and a portly gentleman fell over our ease. Marcus's voice came to me in muffled tones reminiscent of the inside of a rugger scrum.

". . . so he flung his legs up and crowned him with his spurs."

I made suitable apologies to the portly gentleman.

By the time we reached the Underground platform Hank (or possibly Sam) had avoided death narrowly again at least twice, and I was beginning to think that he had lived too long.

"Gosh!" exclaimed Marcus. "I forgot about the girl." In fact his expression showed that he had very little time for her. "Perhaps I could leave her out, except that it would rather mess up a bit which comes in later on."

"Here's the train," I said. "Push your way forward."

When the sliding doors closed behind me I was horrified to see Marcus on the other side of them. His lips were still moving, and the problem of whether to include the girl in his story or not was causing him to frown horribly. I pressed the button to open the doors again and jumped out. As I did so Marcus jumped in, and the doors closed between us once more. Fortunately the guard had seen, and he took charge of the situation, but the advice which he shouted to me as he did so was brusque in the extreme.

In moments of real acute embarrassment my ears sing. As the tube bore us away they were playing a paean, but it would have taken more than that to exclude Marcus.

"Funny thing that," he remarked. "Well, as I've decided to keep this girl in after all, I'll have to go back for a bit."

Which he did as we passed through Edgware Road, Marylebone, Baker Street and Regent's Park. He joined up the threads again as we reached Oxford Circus.

Hank (and Sam, I think) somehow or other abandoned horses in favour of tanks as we were ascending the escalator at Trafalgar Square. If I seem vague about the details, it is because I was very concerned just then with persuading Marcus to stand on the right-hand side of the stair, an idea which he, in his preoccupation, was slow to grasp. Out of the jam of people behind him came some very harsh words about the child's

upbringing. I agreed with every one of them, even though they were uttered in the belief that I was his father.

We emerged into the open air with the film nearing its end. So, for that matter, was my patience. Not only would Marcus keep yapping on one side of me, but everybody we passed on the other seemed to bump into his bag. I was wondering just how painful it would be to have my arm wrenched from its socket at the shoulder.

". . . only one magazine left, and the enemy getting ready to charge," chattered Marcus. "Oh, yes, well, this is where the girl comes in. She sees what's happening, and—"

"Cross now," I said.

We were half-way over when the policeman at the end of Duncannon Street released the traffic. It came roaring down at us wheel-to-wheel on a twenty-yard front.

"Here they come," shouted Marcus. "Just like the film. Gosh!"

He dropped to one knee and raised an imaginary Tommy-gun.

"R-r-r-r!" he snarled. "R-r-r-r! Br-r-up, br-r-up, br-r-up!"

It was necessary to take him by the scruff of the neck in order to save his life. I confess, however, that I held on longer than necessary once safety had been reached. Then we picked up his cap, which had somehow been shaken off, and covered the last few yards in blessed silence.

* * * * *

"He's a bit round the bend, I think," I heard him say to Peggy afterwards. "I took all the trouble to tell him about *Thunder in the Air*, and all the old stinker did was to get into a flying bait."

○ ○

Slur on Two Quavers

HAVE you noticed how street-musicians are coming out again? Uncouth by pre-war standards, perhaps, but the main thing is that they have made a start.

Only the other day I spoke to a cornet-player outside my house. Years of blowing had hunched his shoulders and shortened his neck, so that the brim of his bowler rested on the cornet—sure sign of a veteran player.

"My dear fellow," I said, "you can do better than that!"

He unravelled the cornet from his moustache, opened his eyes and scowled at me.

"I come down to this," he observed sharply.



"I'd like to see Smith have a go from the reredos end."

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"Got your ticket?" he snapped.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Are you a member of the Buskers' Union?"

"Of course not," I replied stiffly. "I wasn't playing for money."

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—it was, or had been, navy-blue, whereas I had on my new brown suit with the carpet pattern.

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But he can't have the cap—I have given that to Smythe's boy.

Mechanization

(Written to help my aunt on June 8th)

THIS is the Rumble Past of War Machines
And I intend to make myself your guide,
Explaining what a Modern Army means,
And how it works, and what it does inside.

This is a kind of Tower upon a Float,
This is an Instrument for Cooking Meals,
This is an Object of Peculiar Note.
It runs on Petrol. It has Curious Wheels.

This is a Boat that rides upon the Land,
This is a Cart that swims upon the Sea,
This is—no, this I do not understand,
This is a perfect mystery to me.

This is the sort of thing that Did the Job;
Devised by Experts, it fulfilled its aim:
I should describe it as a thingummy-bob,
I cannot recollect its actual name.

This is a—dammit, what I said before,
A large arrangement suitably designed
To serve its purpose in the Hour of War
And pull the other thing which comes behind.

This is a sort of Elemental Hoe
That is a kind of Superhuman Crane,
And not a single person seems to know
If any of them will be used again. EVOE.

Brains

IN writing about brains I know I am dealing with a rather delicate subject. I don't want to abash those of my readers who think themselves not very clever and are already wondering how they are going to be got at this time. Still less do I want to encourage the opposite side—already bridling self-consciously in the belief that it is about to confirm its opinion of itself. I think the fairest method of approach is to tell both sides what I heard on the wireless the other day. It was a scientist saying that there is not nearly as much difference between people's and other people's brains as between the brains of people, the whole lot of them, and animals, the whole lot of them. Let my readers ponder on this and stop nagging. Statisticians, by the way, support the statement eagerly; saying that the cleverest animals cannot do the simplest sum, while it is known that the stupidest humans can because the simplest sum is a sum that even the stupidest humans can do. Statistics, they add, reveal also that the cleverest thing most animals can do is tell when a meal is late, which is about the least clever thing most humans can do. Talking of animals' brains, I wonder if my readers read a recent newspaper article about dogs having none whatever, and if the dog-owners noticed that they were reacting like dog-owners, or if they just reacted like dog-owners?

Even if animals do not have what humans mean by

brains, it cannot be denied that different animals have different mental set-ups which give them the effect of character, if not always exactly of intelligence. My readers have all met those black, bushy Scotch terriers with tartan collars, a clockwork gait and a certain wildness of eye which may be due to the surrounding hair but, it would be nicer to think, means something, however little. No one can see such a dog, temporarily anchored by a stationary owner and watching each passer-by through its arc of vision, without thinking that here is an attitude to life paralleled only by the men who run the funny columns in the daily papers. Cats, on the other hand—I am sorry to have to say it—have no attitude to life, or not one they could put in writing. They do have a predetermined slant on the world, which they think little of, and a boundless self-confidence and a huge appetite. With such equipment and their habit of shutting their eyes when not thinking, they have long fooled the public. Mice are more difficult to sum up because, with all their film publicity, they cannot hope to be more than a pale imitation of themselves; but it is safe to say that mice are wary and persevering and are not so single-minded about cheese as tradition used to think. Bees and ants are either so clever that they are stupid or the other way round. As for hens, I need only remind those of my readers who have ever tried to show a hen out of a wire-netting enclosure how they felt as they watched the hen scurrying to and fro past the open door in its efforts to find a hole in the netting the same size as all the other holes. Hen-owners are unique, or the opposite of dog-owners, in that they are the first to tell you their pets are stupid, and hens are the opposite of dogs in that no one loves them more than they deserve.

I seem to have used a lot of space on animals, but it will have been worth while if it has sent even the least arrogant of my readers back where they belong, at the top of creation. Now let us consider human brains, and their place in the life of mankind. Brains being, as the scientist was saying, what distinguishes mankind from animals, it is only natural that mankind should be expected to begin using its brains very early on. Indeed, it starts running them in long before it can remember, I mean before it can remember afterwards. During this running-in period mankind bangs bricks together, hammers pegs into boards and gets through a number of other small tasks which, without appearing to onlookers to cut much mental ice, somehow get it to the point when it is called on to perform a feat of brain-power known off-handedly enough as *learning to talk*. Learning to talk seems so impossible to people thinking about it in later life that all they can conclude is that they were lucky to learn then, when they could. Second only to talking comes learning to read. How many of my readers would care to take that on again, or embark on that long, slow process known as school?

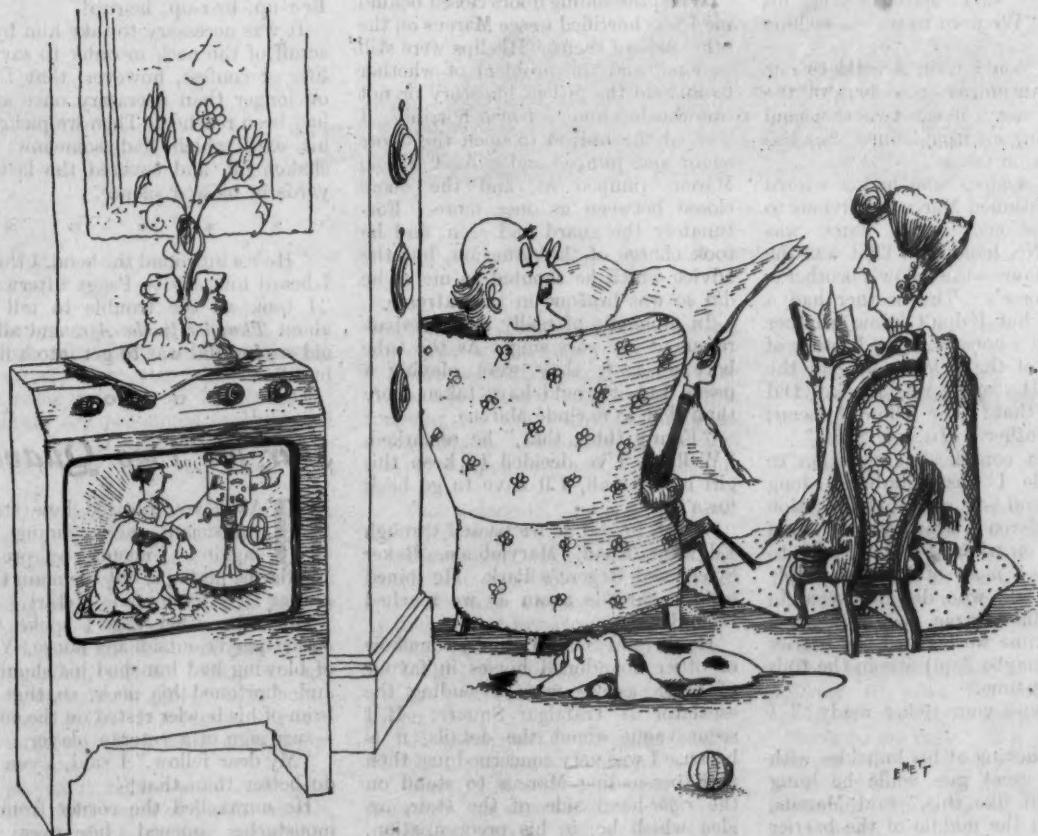
There is much talk nowadays about doing away with school examinations, or anyway, making them different from the ones my readers experienced, and I expect my readers took this as they have in the past taken the news of other educational reforms—ungrudgingly, but with a feeling that they themselves are rather a tribute to the old hard days. Tribute or not, most of them will remember that examinations were some of the main features of their school careers; even though their actual memories of these occasions may have got overlaid with those dreams where they are sitting in the Crystal Palace waiting for the history papers to be handed out, or have passed some important examination without going in for it, or even (so wayward is the dream-mind) done one sum of an arithmetic paper and found it right when they woke up. It

is small wonder that most people cannot recall honestly what they felt about school examinations, beyond that sensation of wondering afterwards how they got so many marks. What is surprising is to find an old examination paper and realize that once we knew, or did not know, all those questions; especially the contexts in the English literature papers. How many of my readers could write notes nowadays on the average quotation from *Macbeth*? About the only examination question most of us could tackle nowadays is an essay on some nice abstract subject, with doubts that now we might do it too well.

My readers may be thinking that all this about examinations is not strictly to do with brains, because people take examinations, anyway to start with, whether they have brains or not. This is, indeed, the point about education generally. While we are undergoing education, whether we have much brain or little, we have to use that brain to a quite startling degree, or so it seems looking at it from here. I mentioned the *Macbeth* contexts, but these are only one branch of the information we come by. At some time in our lives we had in our heads the nature of isobars, the cross-section of a buttercup, the inside dope on the Thirty Years' War, how to measure the width of a stream by the height of a tree, who Jenkins's ear was, and what causes fog. My readers will now be expecting me to tell them that what separates clever people from unclever people is the ability to go on remembering this in later

life; but psychologists say this is not necessarily so. They say the clever people are the ones who know they knew a thing once and worry their friends by trying to remember it when it comes up in conversation, and the unclever people are the ones who have renounced their claim to this sort of fact and are now concentrating quietly on answering their letters and getting their shoes mended.

I haven't left much space to say anything about brains in adult life, but all I really want to say is that people tend to divide themselves into highbrows and lowbrows and thereafter to transfer their allegiance either very openly or very stealthily; but the whole question is rather relative, and many a highbrow has gone temporarily tough on meeting an even higher level of culture. (I don't want my readers to think I am confusing culture with brains, but I don't want either to sort the two out at the moment.) And finally, since I am talking of highbrow, I must mention those weekly reviews and their effect on ordinary readers. By ordinary readers I mean people who read them regularly but are not otherwise any different from ordinary people. The effect of such reviews on such people is twofold and may be defined as a realization that if they are not as clever as they should be then they are still quite clever, and quite happy, and a suspicion that leaving out the commas they themselves would have put in, especially all those times before the word "who," is either very clever indeed or something they should point out to the editor.



"Shouldn't be surprised if the television studio started up any day now."

I Meet Marcus

MARCUS comes home tomorrow evening for the Victory celebrations," said Nora.

Marcus, aged ten, is her nephew. I have never liked him much.

"Peggy can't get to Paddington to meet him," continued Nora. "She wonders if you could do that for her. She'll be waiting for you both under the clock at Charing Cross. His train gets in at five-teh."

It seemed a small enough contribution to make to a national event, although it did occur to me that Marcus, for his part, was not leaving peak-hour travel to workers.

Marcus arrived on a train which disgorged its contents like a sausage bursting in the frying-pan. In the midst of it all was Marcus. He had an enormous suitcase. We began to make our way towards the barrier among about two thousand people charged with the same idea.

"I say," said Marcus over his shoulder. "We went to see a smashing film."

"If you could walk a little to one side," I murmured, conscious of the fact that many of the two thousand were pushing me from behind, "or else get along a bit faster . . ."

"About a chap who had a wizard horse," continued Marcus, oblivious to my suggestions. "Its name was Stanley. No, hang on. That was the brother's name—the fellow's brother's, not the horse's. The brother had a horse too, but I don't know whether the brother's horse was the brother of the horse of the fellow who had the brother. His name was Hank. Did I tell you that? The fellow, I mean; not the brother. His was Sam."

It was a complicated situation to grasp while I was stumbling along with a kind of syncopated action between Marcus, who was not in a hurry and on whom I did not wish to tread, and a mass of forceful people who were and who did not seem to mind treading on me.

By the time we reached the barrier Hank (or maybe Sam) was in the toils for the first time.

"Have you your ticket ready?" I asked.

". . . whacking at his knuckles with a socking great gun while he hung from a cliff like this," said Marcus, stopping in the middle of the barrier and stretching up his arms by way of demonstration.

His ticket was immediately brushed

from his hand. The crowd surged over our heads as we both dived for it, and a portly gentleman fell over our case. Marcus's voice came to me in muffled tones reminiscent of the inside of a rugger scrum.

". . . so he flung his legs up and crowned him with his spurs."

I made suitable apologies to the portly gentleman.

By the time we reached the Underground platform Hank (or possibly Sam) had avoided death narrowly again at least twice, and I was beginning to think that he had lived too long.

"Gosh!" exclaimed Marcus. "I forgot about the girl." In fact his expression showed that he had very little time for her. "Perhaps I could leave her out, except that it would rather mess up a bit which comes in later on."

"Here's the train," I said. "Push your way forward."

When the sliding doors closed behind me I was horrified to see Marcus on the other side of them. His lips were still moving, and the problem of whether to include the girl in his story or not was causing him to frown horribly. I pressed the button to open the doors again and jumped out. As I did so Marcus jumped in, and the doors closed between us once more. Fortunately the guard had seen, and he took charge of the situation, but the advice which he shouted to me as he did so was brusque in the extreme.

In moments of really acute embarrassment my ears sing. As the tube bore us away they were playing a paean, but it would have taken more than that to exclude Marcus.

"Funny thing that," he remarked. "Well, as I've decided to keep this girl in after all, I'll have to go back for a bit."

Which he did as we passed through Edgware Road, Marylebone, Baker Street and Regent's Park. He joined up the threads again as we reached Oxford Circus.

Hank (and Sam, I think) somehow or other abandoned horses in favour of tanks as we were ascending the escalator at Trafalgar Square. If I seem vague about the details, it is because I was very concerned just then with persuading Marcus to stand on the right-hand side of the stair, an idea which he, in his preoccupation, was slow to grasp. Out of the jam of people behind him came some very harsh words about the child's

upbringing. I agreed with every one of them, even though they were uttered in the belief that I was his father.

We emerged into the open air with the film nearing its end. So, for that matter, was my patience. Not only would Marcus keep yapping on one side of me, but everybody we passed on the other seemed to bump into his bag. I was wondering just how painful it would be to have my arm wrenched from its socket at the shoulder.

". . . only one magazine left, and the enemy getting ready to charge," chattered Marcus. "Oh, yes, well, this is where the girl comes in. She sees what's happening, and—"

"Cross now," I said.

We were half-way over when the policeman at the end of Duncannon Street released the traffic. It came roaring down at us wheel-to-wheel on a twenty-yard front.

"Here they come," shouted Marcus. "Just like the film. Gosh!"

He dropped to one knee and raised an imaginary Tommy-gun.

"R-r-r-r!" he snarled. "R-r-r-r! Br-r-up, br-r-up, br-r-up!"

It was necessary to take him by the scruff of the neck in order to save his life. I confess, however, that I held on longer than necessary once safety had been reached. Then we picked up his cap, which had somehow been shaken off, and covered the last few yards in blessed silence.

* * * * *

"He's a bit round the bend, I think," I heard him say to Peggy afterwards. "I took all the trouble to tell him about *Thunder in the Air*, and all the old stinker did was to get into a flying bait."

o o

Slur on Two Quavers

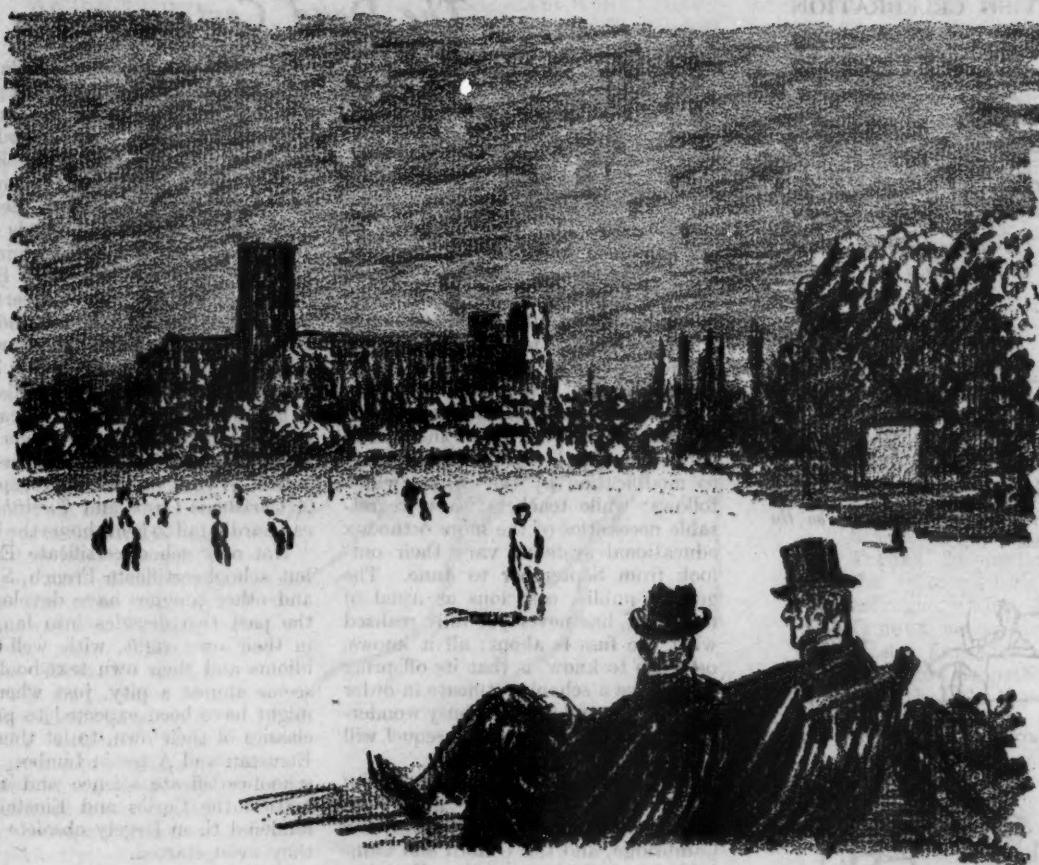
HAVE you noticed how street-musicians are coming out again? Uncouth by pre-war standards, perhaps, but the main thing is that they have made a start.

Only the other day I spoke to a cornet-player outside my house. Years of blowing had hunched his shoulders and shortened his neck, so that the brim of his bowler rested on the cornet—sure sign of a veteran player.

"My dear fellow," I said, "you can do better than that!"

He unravelled the cornet from his moustache, opened his eyes and scowled at me.

"I come down to this," he observed sharply.



"I'd like to see Smith have a go from the reredos end."

"But your phrasing is wrong. You were playing 'Drink to me only with thine eyes,' were you not?"

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BRITISH CELEBRATION

Frasers

The Thompsons aren't going because really one procession is very like another . . .



the Dicksons aren't going because really you see it much better on the news-reels . . .



the Harrisons aren't going because really the trouble of getting there . . .



the Jacksons aren't going because really the crowds . . .



and the Robinsions aren't going because well, really . . .



so it won't be very surprising if they all meet.

The Dead Cert.

SCHOOL Cert." is doomed, it seems, its death-warrant signed by the Minister of Education in person, and the hollow laughter of this year's candidates still echoes round the cloisters. Throughout the five years since the Norwood Report boldly stated that "the examination in its present form is having a cramping effect upon the minds of teachers and pupils," pupils below the Sixth Form have discreetly applauded the principle while distrusting the view through the magic casement flung open before them.

Examiners themselves, while marking their papers, have been inclined to agree, though their views are subject to modification by the cheque which follows; while teachers, those regrettable necessities of the more orthodox educational systems, vary their outlook from September to June. The general public, conscious as usual of noises off, has never yet fully realized what the fuss is about: all it knows, or needs to know, is that its offspring must have a school certificate in order to get a job, and it is now busy wondering whether the immediate sequel will be universal unemployment.

There are eight examining bodies now awaiting execution, if we are careful not to count the Oxford, the Cambridge, and the Oxford and Cambridge more than once each. Each has its devoted champions, all of whom have passed the examination. London calls its examination General Schools, but the natural effect of this is that most of its clients follow their grandfathers and call it "matric." The popular idea that the school certificate is a hide-bound reactionary institution is in fact wholly unjustified. Even within the past few years a decision has been made and put into practice that a "distinction" should no longer be called by that name, but by that of "very good." This noticeably oiled the wheels of learning, and was intended to pave the way for even greater reforms.

The layman is sometimes horrified to learn that, except in English papers, no marks are deducted for bad grammar, spelling or writing; and, according to teachers, not obviously in the English papers either. It must be remembered, however, that a candidate needs at least block capitals and words of one syllable to get past the examiners in English Language, and if he fails to do this he cannot receive a certificate at all. English Literature, which consists of a Shakespeare play and one other book, has for some years been a whole subject by itself. For this paper it is desirable to be able to read, but never to have read, as previous knowledge clogs the brain and confuses the issues. A year, or four or five, spent on *A Christmas Carol* and *Twelfth Night* can hardly fail to bring home the bacon.

Not only school-certificate English, but school-certificate French, Spanish and other tongues have developed in the past two decades into languages in their own right, with well-known idioms and their own text-books. It seems almost a pity, just when they might have been expected to produce classics of their own, to let them join Etruscan and Aztec in Limbo. As for school-certificate science and mathematics, the Curie and Einstein had rendered them largely obsolete before they even started.

Many have expressed sympathy with the examinee and the teacher, a few even with the examiner; but no one has ever yet let fall a public tear for the invigilator, without whom the whole affair would be null. If he happens also to have taught some of the candidates, his situation is truly pitiable. As they stumble in for the first paper, pale of face, distraught in manner, all ready but the fillets and the barley-meal for the supreme sacrifice, the invigilator's mind runs on the brutal Phoenicians and their god Moloch. As he himself immerses the poor wretches under mounds of specially ruled paper and multi-coloured forms and folders, or entangles them in skeins of string for tying their worthless efforts together, his heart bleeds. Still more freely does it bleed, like something in a Poe story, when he wanders round during the service and catches glimpses of what the congregation is writing. When at last his relief arrives, he staggers away almost converted to that school of educational experts which holds that knowledge and education are not only separate but incompatible.

At the Pictures

SUSPENSE AND CHARACTER

MUSIC to accompany psychological aberration seems to be coming typed: the sequence of trembling, echoing semitones that tells us when the border-line is approaching in *Spellbound* (Director: ALFRED HITCHCOCK) is strongly reminiscent of the theme used similarly in *The Lost Week-End*.

This story of an amnesia victim (GREGORY PECK) cured of his "guilt-complex" by a woman doctor (INGRID BERGMAN) is publicized as Mr. HITCHCOCK's excursion in psychiatry, but I think he's really on form only in the department where he always has been strongest: suspense, with devices of exactly the same sort as those he has used for many years in more orthodox thrillers. The letter on the floor—will they notice it? The razor in his hand—will he strike with it? These things are designed to arouse the same emotions as was the celebrated slowly-ripping coat in *Saboteur*; they succeed perfectly, and they have no more to do with psychiatry than that had to do with sabotage. When it forsakes these essentially absorbing matters the film is less happy: one doesn't take very much interest in two doctors expounding to each other the ABC of their craft so as to make it easy for the audience, nor does the old, old business about the learned lady with no experience of love improve on the umpteenth repetition. The strength of the piece is in its essentials: suspense, mystery (the hero doesn't know who he is), pursuit (the police are after him for murder), and the final revelation of the villain. If you are a psycho-analyst you can identify the murderer by interpreting a dream sequence on which SALVADOR DALI and a real psychiatric authority collaborated.

The playing is not very distinguished, except for that of MICHAEL CHEKHOV as the old analyst, whose every appearance wakens that unmistakable continuing stir of delight in the

audience—the last time I mentioned it I was writing about HUME CRONYN in the Spencer Tracy film *The Seventh Cross*—that is aroused when a real character appears, with some fresh, individual, interesting qualities about him.



J.H. DOWD
[Spellbound]

<i>Brulov</i>	<i>MICHAEL CHEKHOV</i>
<i>Dr. Peterson</i>	<i>INGRID BERGMAN</i>
<i>Dr. Edwards</i>	<i>GREGORY PECK</i>

A point about the best French films is that nearly all the players have that stimulating freshness and animation; and *Premier Rendezvous* (Director: HENRI DECOIN), though by no means one of the best, and indeed far too full of "hokum" to be put even at the



J.H.D.
[Premier Rendezvous]
"AGONY COLUMN" MEETING

<i>Nicolas</i>	<i>FERNAND LEDOUX</i>
<i>Micheline</i>	<i>DANIELLE DARIEUX</i>

top of the second flight, still has several characters that make it worth seeing. A young girl in an orphanage answers the advertisement of "Un Inconnu" in search of friendship, secretly corresponds with him, and at last (captivated by his literary style and the ease with which he handles his subjunctives) runs away from the orphanage to meet him. The unknown is a middle-aged schoolmaster; observing her disappointment at his appearance, he pretends to be representing someone younger. After this we get a good deal of Hollywood-style foolery on the conventional pattern—the girl hiding in the masculine community, the difficulties about the bedroom, and so on. Still there are flashes of good fun: JEAN TISSIER in particular, as the schoolmaster's worldly colleague, is a joy. FERNAND LEDOUX makes the schoolmaster himself a considerably more sympathetic character than the flashy young man who gets the girl (DANIELLE DARIEUX) in the end.

In *Spellbound* the amnesia victim merely thought he was a murderer; in the British film *Wanted for Murder* (Director: LAWRENCE HUNTINGTON) the principal character is a schizophrenic who very well knows he is. He blames his grandfather, a hangman who took a pleasure in his work. This film is an unsatisfactory but interesting mixture of irritating faults and considerable merits, its greatest merit being a free and usually convincing use of London scenes. Its greatest fault, I think, is that quality (so often found in British films) that is very hard to sum up briefly: a kind of juvenility, a schoolboyishness, a charade-like atmosphere in certain scenes that seems to imply to the audience "We're all friends together and you know the kind of effect we want to make here—be kind and pretend we've really made it." ERIC PORTMAN, excellent as the murderer, asks for no such concession; and there are very pleasing performances by ROLAND CULVER and STANLEY HOLLOWAY as Scotland Yard men. R. M.

Victory

WHO are the faithful? Some in Africa

W sleep after battles which they thought were lost,
some in the deep, some in the shallow sea
rest; some by beaches now quiet in Normandy:
some died with the salt taste of victory
warm on their lips:
and these died far away
from home
and grudged but exile of the coast.

Where are the faithful?

Some in hospital
drag out the weary days, the wearier nights.
Where are the faithful?
Some in Britain died,
the steadfast, and the humble, and the true:
died, though not soldiers, jesting as soldiers do
and grousing;
and they are at peace, with all
those, first among equals, with whom none can divide
however brave, their epitaph
“The Few.”

Where are the faithful?

Look about you, look,
you who decry
the barren-seeming of their victory;
they do not fear the years ahead, who kept
their feet when all the ground of the round globe shook.
D. G. S.

R. C. S.

Lady Addle and the Gipsies

Bengers, Herts, 1946

MY DEAR, DEAR READERS,—I am not going to write about the Derby—in preparation for which you will doubtless as you read this be drawing on your kid gloves and adjusting your feather boas—because, as I said before, my knowledge of the turf is not expert, and I do not like to bother dear Addle again so soon for another contribution. He put his all into the last, and was exhausted for several days afterwards. He is not one of those people who take things lightly. For instance, I have noticed that when out shooting he will take two or three practice shots at a pheasant before he hits it. That is the stuff that real workers are made of.

Another reason why I should find it hard to write of that great race is the sad changes which have taken place since I first used to drive to Epsom in my father's coach, with its spirited chestnuts in front, the cream of *Debrett* on top and a wondrous lunch inside. What a shock I received when, shortly before the war, Mispie

asked if she could chaperone Margaret to the Derby! I acquiesced gratefully, for I thought it might be a good opportunity for my dear girl to meet folk of her own age—but another sex. Margaret was in her late twenties then and—well, anyway, it would be a pleasant outing. Then came the bombshell. Mipsie said “Gassy Clumber is taking us all in a bus.” That Lord Clumber, who is such a stickler for smartness that he used always to wear spats with a dressing-gown, should attend the Derby in an ordinary omnibus! However, the party included several particularly eligible young men, so I overcame my prejudices and accepted for Margaret. Alas! it did not turn out quite as I had hoped, though my dear girl said she had a splendid view of the race, sitting on top with Lady Clumber. But all the others seem to have scattered on to the course, and as for Mipsie, the bus party was just about to start back, having despaired of finding either her or Max Clumber, Gassy’s charming son in the R.E., when there came a little scream

from my sister: "Don't start. We're here." They then crawled out from beneath the bus, where they had been for some time, Max having apparently been giving Mipsie a lesson in mechanics.

How picturesque and gay was the old Derby Day, with its colourful pageant of costers and gipsies! Mention of the latter recalls several episodes connected with my own family which I think may interest my dear readers. Many must have heard of Balder Heath, which lies just outside the great gates of Coot's Balder, and is a famous gipsy encampment, especially for Romany weddings. The story goes that an ancestor of mine, always known as the Wild Earl, was once seen jumping over the roasting carcass of an ox, hand in hand with a beautiful gipsy girl. There was a great scandal about the episode, as the ox was traced to a neighbouring landlord, who complained that Lord Coot should use his own cattle for his own weddings. To soothe the indignant man the Wild Earl agreed, after a week or two of marriage, to send back his bride, and thus was honour satisfied. But the story has a romantic sequel.

When a little girl of eleven, Mipsie's vivid imagination was kindled by the tale, and she laughingly announced her intention of becoming a gipsy bride herself. Next morning, she was discovered to be missing from her bed! Agonized hours passed, after a fruitless search, and then a note was found on mama's desk: "If you want to see yor darter again put yor rooby star on frunt mat and dont cum nere. The Gipsies." Immediately the demand was obeyed. What was one ruby star compared with a beloved daughter's fate? The morning passed, and then another note appeared. "Now yor saffire snake bracelet please." This—a particular favourite of mama's—was also, rather regretfully, placed on the mat. But still no Mipsie appeared. The mysterious thing was, how did the gipsies know these details of mama's jewels? Also, it was surprising to find that such uneducated people could write, even with bad spelling and in a childish hand. (Much like Mipsie's handwriting, as it happened.) However, nothing could be done save place the jewels on the mat as before. But this time, by papa's orders, a footman concealed himself behind the front door and, when he heard the sound of stealthy footsteps approaching, he suddenly flung open the portals in the face of—Mipsie herself. How we thronged around her, with tears and laughter at the blessed reunion! But not a word would she say as to what

had happened to her, or why she was released before the last ransom was claimed. Loyalty, even to vagrants, who had given her hospitality, was too strong for that noble nature. Nor would she explain to me when, years afterwards, I found the ruby star and the snake bracelet in her own jewel-case. I can only presume that the gipsies fell in love with her, as everyone does, and returned the jewels at some later date.

Struck by this latent integrity and fine feeling in a much-abused race, I essayed, when I was in my twenties, to educate some of the more intelligent gipsies out of the many hundreds encamped on Balder Heath. I would invite little parties to go round the gardens with me, and there instruct them in French, practising on the names of vegetables and flowers. I was making considerable progress the first year, and only stopped the lessons because it happened to be a very bad season for the garden and after a week or two I could hardly find a vegetable or flower to use for instruction purposes. And when I planned to "repeat the dose" the following summer, Noggan, our dear old head gardener, implored me, with tears in his eyes, to desist, saying that it would mean another bad year for the garden. Much superstitious feeling, especially amongst country-folk, still remains, I fear, against the romantic Romany folk.

M. D.

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Doors

I HOPE it may be openly stated without prejudicing the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations now in progress that Egypt is a country with a minimum of doors. In hotels and clubs the rooms are divided by bead curtains, and the tents which Sympson and I occupied for three long years were also doorless.

This probably explains why, since my return to England, I have developed the habit of not shutting doors when I enter a room, which causes great irritation to my wife. I stride boldly into the room, sit down in my comfortable chair, and am about to light my pipe when I see Edith gazing at me reproachfully.

"Darling," she says, "the door."

Naturally I apologize, put down my pipe, hoist myself out of my chair, stride across the room, shut the door, return to my seat, pick up my pipe, and then remember that I have left my tobacco in my overcoat pocket. I

go out of the room to get my tobacco, and presently return to my chair.

Again I pick up my pipe.

"Darling," says Edith, "the door." This time her voice has a faint inflection, not exactly of anger, but of long-suffering patience.

I asked Sympson the other day whether he was afflicted by the same trouble.

"I was," he said; "when I first came home I was always leaving my doors open. Not being married, it annoyed nobody but myself, but an open door irritates me almost beyond endurance, and I have sat for many hours lying back in my chair in great discomfort, gazing at a door that I have carelessly left open, and wondering if I should catch my death of cold from the draught. But a little ingenuity soon overcame the difficulty."

"I should be glad to hear about it," I said.

"I thought it would be a good idea to fit springs to all the doors in my flat," he said, "to make them self-closing, but as I could not get any springs I had to find a substitute, and purchased several yards of rubber belting. By screwing about a foot of this material to each door and door-post I have made all my doors self-closing. It is a great success."

I thanked him, and immediately purchased several yards of rubber belting and some screws. Edith was out when I got home, so I thought I would attend to the doors immediately, as a pleasant surprise for her. I

finished the job and went out to post a letter, and when I entered the house I found her sitting on the floor of the passage surrounded by broken crockery.

"I can't understand what happened," she said. "I was coming out of the kitchen with the tea-tray, on the way to the sitting-room, when I was struck violently and unexpectedly from behind."

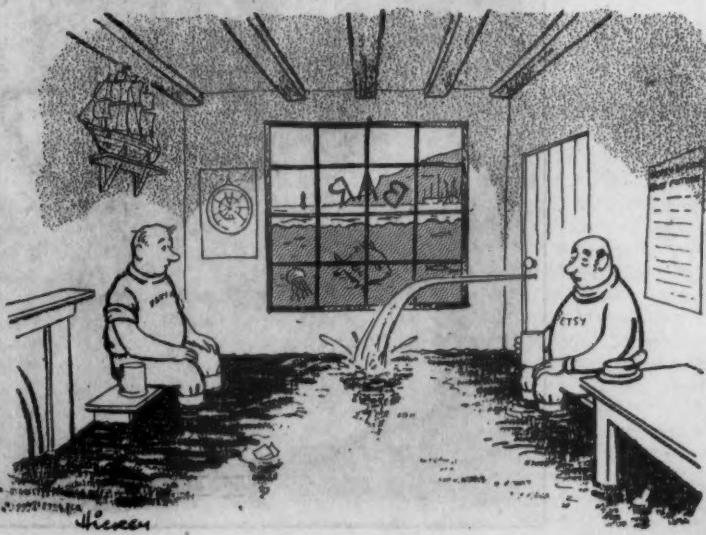
When I showed her what I had done to all the doors she was hardly as grateful as I had hoped. I pointed out that if she had been a little more observant she would have seen the self-closing devices, and not been taken unawares when the door swung back.

I loaded another tray with tea-things and managed to get out of the kitchen without damage. I was just thinking how easy it was as I entered the sitting-room, when the sitting-room door hit me violently on the elbow and another trayful of crockery crashed to the floor.

After tea I removed all the pieces of rubber, and was just unscrewing the last screw when Sympson rang up from a call-box to ask if we could offer him hospitality for the night.

"A ridiculous thing has happened," he said, "I forgot about the gadget on the front door of my flat, and when I was putting out my milk bottle the door suddenly shut, hurled me into the passage, and locked me out."

We are now waiting anxiously for bead curtains to be decontrolled.



"No, I can't rightly say as I DO remember a higher tide."

of the day, and I have seen
all terrible things, but
you still do worse,
and you're a pig.

And when I look at you
I am ashamed of you.
I am not the person you
are, and you're not
the person you used to be.

And I think you're
still the dog of bogey
but now I'm afraid
I'm not even a
coward, and I'm
not so stupid as
you were.

And this is not
the dog of bogey
but now I'm afraid
I'm not even a
coward, and I'm
not so stupid as
you were.

So now you old ill-harmonized
old grumpy old man
and who bleeps our bleeps?

"Desquid and quid
no quid and quid
I think this tall quid
and offed allin you
and quid and quid
"Am we here
not desquid and quid
desquid and quid



Victor Arden's caricature of Winston Churchill

VICTOR ARDEN



OR PARADE

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Monday, May 27th.—House of Commons: Sharp Words—and Blunt Facts—on Steel.

Tuesday, May 28th.—House of Commons: A Vote on Steel.

Wednesday, May 29th.—House of Commons: Votes Itself a Little More Cash.

Thursday, May 30th.—House of Commons: The Future of Compulsory Service.

Monday, May 27th.—The day's debate was on the Government's plans to nationalize the iron and steel industry—or some part or parts of it. Mr. JOHN WILMOT, the Minister of Supply, explained the Government's plans, which he said had been approved in advance by the electors at the General Election. In proof whereof he quoted a piece from "Let Us Face the Future," Labour's election manifesto. Mr. HUGH DALTON, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who rarely speaks in the House without quoting from that gospel, looked slightly resentful at this infraction of his copyright. However, Mr. WILMOT did his best to make a convincing case for the Government's action, and sat down amid cheering.

Mr. OLIVER LYTTELTON, speaking for the Opposition, dashed into the fray with a perfect arsenal of metaphors, which he proceeded to loose off with abandon. Mr. WILMOT, said he, scathingly, was "the Little Bo-Peep of Politics," as he had lost his policies and did not know where to find them. He was also a judge who pronounced sentence before hearing the evidence, and asked the prisoner to help in carrying out the sentence. Anyway, Mr. LYTTELTON made it clear he did not like the Government's plans—or the Government, if it came to that.

Mr. CLEMENT DAVIES, who is a K.C. as well as being leader of the Liberal M.P.s remarked that he was not convinced by either side and that the only thing that would convince him would be the production of good, hard, shining steel. And if we did not get that steel—then we were "sunk."

Tuesday, May 28th.—Mr. HUGH DALTON, Chancellor of the Exchequer, resumed the debate on the nationalization of the iron and steel industry, with a few gentle digs at the Opposition. Rather in the manner of the excited small boy at the cinema who warns the threatened hero to "look be'ind 'im," as the dagger-armed villain steals up. Mr. DALTON gave Conservatives the confidential tip that, if they failed to

divide the House against the Government's plans, they would go in peril of a ticking-off from Lord BEAVERBROOK. Anyway, the plans were good ones, and they would work, he claimed. Sir ANDREW DUNCAN was a "great Socialist administrator"—an unsolicited testimonial which the Right Honourable Member for the City of London on the Opposition Front Bench seemed not to take with too much favour.

When it came to Sir ANDREW's turn he was far less gentle. The Government's plans, he said toughly, would dismember and disembowel the iron and steel industry. And nobody would get any benefit from the change over from private enterprise to public lack

kindness of Mr. DALTON (*in re* the tip about the danger from Lord BEAVERBROOK) by warning the Government that if it put its latest plans into operation it would do a great deal to frustrate its own lavish promises about the restoration of plenty and prosperity.

"We'll risk it!" was the effect of the reply made by Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, Lord President of the Council and Acting President of the Board of Trade (he did not say whether he spoke as Pooh or Bah). There was too much of the spirit of "Let it be and leave it alone" and he (like the preacher on sin) was against it. Things got lively for a time, and Mr. MORRISON mentioned that he had never seen "such a lot of simpletons" as the Conservatives.

Then the House divided, and the Government won approval for its iron and steel nationalization plans by 338 votes to 184.

Wednesday, May 29th.—Mr. HERBERT MORRISON and Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL continued to-day their "needle match" which the House has come to regard as a normal and permanent institution.

Mr. MORRISON explained that a furore in the Press during the week-end over his arrangement with the United States Government about food had all been a mistake. He seemed to blame the Press for this—but added later that the U.S. Government had apologized for the error. But the important thing was that there was no misunderstanding, at any rate so far as the two Governments were concerned.

"But," said Mr. CHURCHILL, "it is unfortunate that a subordinate official of the U.S. Government should have contradicted the Lord President in this rather disconcerting manner. The trouble could have been avoided by sending to Washington the actual text of what it was proposed to say."

"You," retorted Mr. MORRISON later, "do not understand the normal procedure . . ."

"It is my inexperience!" rapped Mr. CHURCHILL icily.

"You," cried Mr. MORRISON, "don't understand everything! You show most persistent determination to try to make this politics, somehow. You are utterly incapable of judging even words on their usual meaning."

Mr. CHURCHILL got up, the light of battle in his eye, scorching words on his lips. But Mr. Speaker got in first, and pointed out that the Question-hour was becoming a debate.

Mr. CHURCHILL rose a little later and said that "in view of the anxiety on the other side for a debate" he would consider whether this could be arranged.

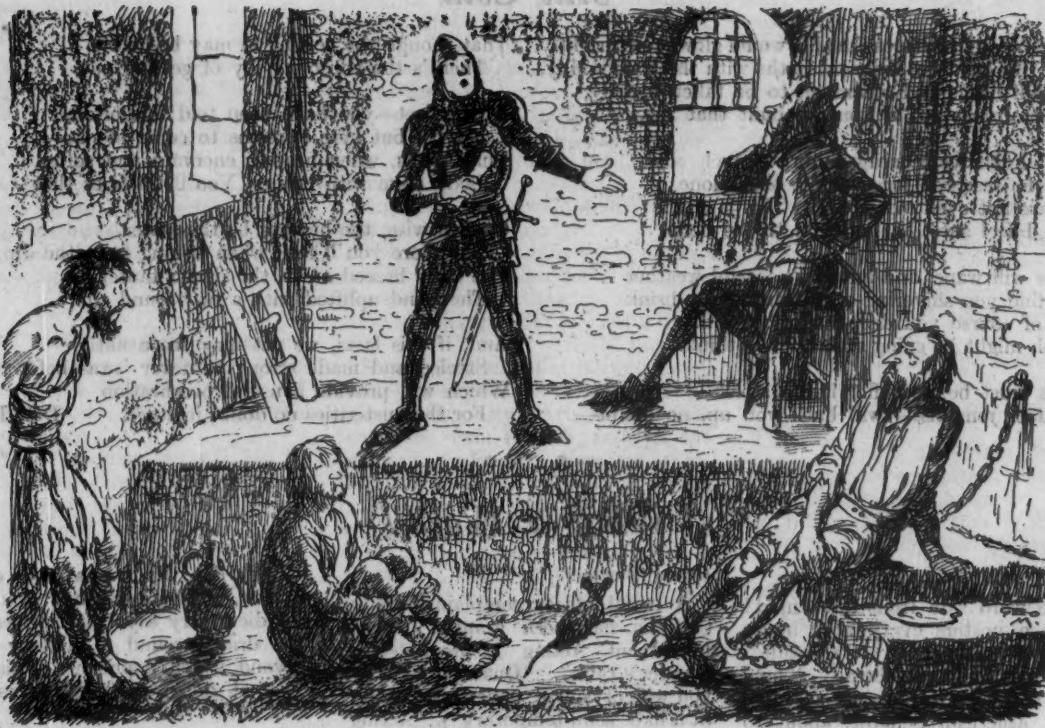


"Sir Andrew Duncan has done a great job."
The Chancellor of the Exchequer.

of same. Mr. DALTON looked as though he were about to leap up and withdraw, cancel and expunge the title he had given Sir ANDREW, but restrained himself.

Captain PETER THORNEYCROFT, from the Conservative benches, asked the Government a few pointed questions, though as the Lord President was replying he estimated his chances of getting any of them answered at "almost nil." Mr. MORRISON made, as might be expected, a somewhat sharp rejoinder to this attack.

Mr. ROBERT HUDSON wound up the debate for the Opposition in his customary forthright, factual and good-humoured style. He returned the



"As a special act of mercy you prisoners will be allowed to listen to the merrymaking in the Baron's Hall—and here is Symkyn Wagstaffe, who will act as compère and describe the fun."

Mr. SKEFFINGTON-LODGE, who is a Government supporter, began: "In view of the spiteful and malicious misrepresentations—" But nimble Mr. Speaker was up once more with a gentle reminder of the old rule against the introduction of "insinuations and imputations" into Question-time.

So Mr. CHURCHILL went out, just in time to miss an announcement by Mr. ALFRED BARNES, the Minister of Transport, that railway fares and freight charges are to go up from July 1st. The big falling-off in Government business and traffic accounted for the drop in revenue leading to the rise in charges.

It was clear that the House—particularly on the Government side—did not like the announcement. One Member said bluntly that it would cause grave disquiet, and demanded a debate.

Three "new figures" emerged in the course of the afternoon—Mr. JOHN STRACHEY as Food Minister, Mr. GEOFFREY DE FREITAS as Under-Secretary for Air, and Mr. ARTHUR

MOYLE, the Prime Minister's new Parliamentary Private Secretary.

Messrs. STRACHEY and DR FREITAS were loudly (and deservedly) cheered for the clear and frank way in which they answered questions. But it was Mr. MOYLE who really stole the picture.

He stepped out of his seat behind the Prime Minister, walked briskly to a distant bench, rose and roared the new Minister of Food. Then he announced that he could not accept the Minister's reply to his question, and further, that he proposed to raise a debate on the adjournment.

Half a dozen age-long practices died the death with those words, because P.P.S.s to P.M.s do not ask questions, do not attack their own Governments, and do not raise things on the adjournment. However, Mr. MOYLE took the Opposition ovation with modesty.

The House rapidly completed the consideration of the National Insurance Bill, and then disposed of a proposal to increase its Members' salaries to £1,000 a year—from £600.

The House granted itself the "rise" by 345 to 26. Which seems to mean that the Treasury ought to save 26×£400, or £10,400 a year.

Thursday, May 30th.—Mr. GEORGE ISAACS, the Minister of Labour, amid general cheers, announced that the Government proposed to put an end to the uncertainty in which young men found themselves over the period of military service they would be required to give. It will be two years for those called up in 1947, and the period will fall gradually for later classes. Students and apprentices will be given deferment, so that their service to their country shall not prejudice unfairly their vocations.

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Welcome Home, George!

"Read letter dated 9th inst., from Mr. George MacLean, Registrar, stating that he starts his release leave from the Navy on 12th inst. and will be returning to Inverness shortly. It was agreed that the matter should be considered at the Special Meeting to deal with the Refuse Destructor."

Minutes of Inverness Town Council.

Still Cold

YES, you had hopes that life would glow more brightly
By good hot frequent baths with this year's May,
Full baths and steaming, to be taken nightly,
And mornings too if you are built that way.

Go to. Again your meagre store of fuel
Must be reserved for cooking, that alone.
Baths are not even mentioned. This is cruel,
This, I feel sure, has cut you to the bone.

Summer will wane, and autumn's fearful weather
Will find you shivering on th' unfriendly brink
Unless of course you drop baths altogether
Which might be going rather far, I think.

Well, it must be, so suffer like a stoic.
One fact remains—'twill buck you up, no doubt—

That though the getting in may be heroic
There's the consoling joy of getting out.

Also reflect—you have been told this often,
Maybe, but here it seems to come in pat—
That baths, when heated, enervate and soften
Body alike with brain. You'll think of that?

Contrariwise, the harsher be the water,
The more you'll feel, when issuing from the dip,
The body braced anew, the sinews tauter,
The mind uplifted with a new-found zip.

And, if this lasts, we yet may see a nation
Steeled and made strong as never 'twas before:
Which will provide a useful preparation
For theusterities no doubt in store.

DUM-DUM.

Leave Them Alone

IS no word safe from the stupid? Large posters everywhere invite me to take part in a "Crusade". What for? For saving bread. A long speech is now a "Marathon speech", and an American Senator, about to make a very long speech, said that it would be a "Talkathon". "Cavalcade" has been suffering insult for many years (do you remember the "Motorcade" ?): and now, in Scotland, I hear, a Swimming Bath is about to hold a

VICTORY AQUACADE

Not a "waterfall", I gather: but what is intended I cannot tell. What a pity, as they say, to waste time teaching the "dead" languages!

Then there is "Operation". "Operation Pluto", and so on, are fine parts of our history. But now some ass must cheapen the expression every day. If a man grows two potatoes it is "Operation Famine". And the sprightly writers seem to forget that "Pluto" was a disguise: so they are not merely debasing good coin, but missing the point.

Again, one would not lightly spoil the nation's fun or make more hard the lot of after-dinner speakers; but is it really very clever to parody Mr. Churchill's historic sentence about "the Few"? No doubt the imitation is as flattering as ever; but when some little chap begins "Never did so many plumbbers . . . etc.", those of us who heard the great man say the great thing, and treasure in our minds the great occasion, do feel a little sick.

Heavy Weather

A naval officer complains, mildly, that he has been granted "Quasi-Permanent Acting Lieutenant-Commander's rank". "Quasi-permanent", you will, of course, understand, Bobby (it is like "semi-temporary"). "Acting" means "playing the part, though not bearing the rank of". And "Lieutenant", as you may have forgotten, means "a deputy or substitute for a superior". My correspondent inclines to the view that the Admiralty means to say that he is not quite a Commander. He agrees, but he feels that they have rather overstated the point.

"Overall", etc.

Dear old "overall" spreads like a weed in the political field. Someone the other day complained of someone's "overall attitude". A writer who should know better (indeed, he does) said: "There is an overall shortage of wheat in the world".

EXERCISE

What does he mean, Bobby?

ANSWER

"The world is short of wheat."

How to Write

From a cowboy story:

"The risible faculties of the three men once again disrupted their features."

Making Sure Of It

A speaker not long ago implored the Government to fix a "definite deadline date" for something or other. The difference between a date and a

definite date I am unable to explain to you, Bobby. As for "dead-line", the dictionary says that it means "a line drawn round a military prison beyond which a prisoner is liable to be shot down". So Ministers must look out.

"Personnel"

A warrior sends me this valuable exhibit:

"The fifty personnel of the Standing Committee of the House of Commons . . ."

One day, no doubt, they will be called P.P., instead of M.P. At public dinners, I gather, the toast-master is still using the old-fashioned "My lords, ladies and gentlemen". But "Mr. Chairman, and Personnel" may come.

A writer in a local paper, by the way, was very tart with Mr. Kenneth Pickthorn, M.P., Cambridge University, who:

"saw fit to fritter away the time of the House in chiding Southwark's own George Isaacs for his use of the King's English".

(Mr. Isaacs had spoken of "personnel loaned on a temporary basis".)

"All Parliament knew what he meant . . . And it is a moot point" (Oh, is it?) "whether he was abusing the King's English in such a description".

"It may take a month of Sundays and all the Cantab resources to settle this etymological quibble, but Southwark and the workers of England are in a bigger hurry than Cambridge."

In that case, dear boy, say "lent"

—not "loaned on a temporary basis". And say "men", not "personnel".

Rats!

The "Rodent Operator" is now an old friend; but I am grateful to the warrior who has sent me a bill from the — Corporation:

"To services of Rodent Operator,
2s. 6d."

What the operation was is not stated, but it was cheap. I am sending the bill on to our Southwark friend, who thinks that long words save time. A moot point, no doubt.

-Ize

"-Ize" and "-Ization" words are flung into currency with as little thought as one lights a match, and much less care. Here is an effort by the Board of Trade:

"In reply to your letter I am to inform you that the Board of Trade is not prepared on the evidence available to licence (*sic*) the transfer of the Custodianized assets held in the name of your above customer . . ."

You read, perhaps, about the "de-waterization" of parts of Holland. I shall be told that it is not so easy, Bobby, to say shortly what the chap had in mind: but what is the hurry? Rather than use one hideous thing like "dewaterization" I would use four or five good words, if necessary. But it

would not be necessary. "Drain", after all, means "to withdraw the water, or moisture (from anything)". And if "drain" would not do, I should talk of "land recovery", or "flood abatement". I should make Holland "flood-free" or "disperse the water". Anyhow, I should think a long time before I surrendered to "dewaterization". But they do not think a minute.

How long did they think before they begat "pressurization"?

"He added that nine types of civil aircraft would be developed for pressurization [keeping the same pressure in the cabin at high or at low altitudes]."

(*Daily paper*)

As a correspondent acutely remarks, having let loose these meaningless and ugly words, they have to translate them into plain English, and, for the ordinary reader, no time is saved. Why not use plain English at once? If the experts must have a single code-word for use among themselves it would be better to invent one frankly — "Bingo" or "Wallop" — than to mess about with Greek and Latin roots with which they are imperfectly acquainted.

And do they mean anything more than "pressure adjustment"? If that is it, they may have a "pressure-adjusted cabin", and a big kiss too.

If you saw an Admiralty order about

Wrens headed "Civilianization", you would shudder, I hope, Bobby; but at least, you would think, the meaning was clear — the conversion of Wrens into civilians — "ize" having the chief sense of the Greek *τίκτειν*, to "make". But you would be quite wrong. The order is about the *replacement* of Wren switchboard operators by civilian operators. O gosh!

Next in this catalogue of crime we put an Indian Army Order.

"INDIAN PIONEER CORPS—GRANT OF COMBATANT STATUS

1. The undermentioned Indian Pioneer Companies have been *combatized* . . ."

I heard, and I agree with everything you said, Bobby. But in paragraph 2 the guilty staff officer repents, and he writes:

"2. Pioneers and other personnel will be granted combatant status . . ."

Better than "combatized", Bobby; but better still, one timidly suggests, would be "become fighting soldiers".

Game, Set and Match

"Though the status quo is not sacrosanct and unchangeable we cannot overlook unilateral gnawing away at the status quo." (*American statesman, as reported*.)

A bilateral gnawing away, of course, would be O.K.

A. P. H.



At the Play

"THE WINSLOW BOY" (LYRIC)

IT was not much wonder the Archer-Shee case shook Edwardian England. The Lords of the Admiralty made to eat humble pie, and all because of one five-shilling postal order and one small boy with a determined father! The affair assumed national proportions, and much of this dramatic excitement has been captured by Mr. TERENCE RATTIGAN in a play of two acts. The first exhibits his talents at their best. The bombshell of *Ronnie's* expulsion from Osborne is exploded in the thrifty Kensington home of the Winslows with admirably judged effect. His invalid father, having once convinced himself that his son is innocent, prepares immediately for the long battle against the citadels of Whitehall which is to end two years later in complete victory at the cost of domestic happiness and what is left of his own health. Against the family scene, sketched in with all this author's mastery of light and shade, the fight assumes a significance far greater than itself. It is not one boy's wrongful conviction but a fundamental question of civil liberties which is at issue, and that this emerges so fully is the measure of Mr. RATTIGAN's skill and of Mr. FRANK CELLIER's brilliant performance as *Mr. Winslow*. The first act closes with *Ronnie's* brutal cross-examination by a famous advocate who agrees, on the strength of it, to take on his case. The second act is not of comparable quality. It is necessarily a period of waiting and some of the incidents with which it is filled out, notably those of *Ronnie's* sister's broken engagement, savour a little of anti-climax. But the end, from the moment when Miss KATHLEEN HARRISON as the Cockney maid magnificently brings the news of triumph to the broken old man, is all it should be. This is certainly a piece to see. Mr. EMLYN WILLIAMS, though he plays the great counsel cleverly with the chilly histrionics demanded by the part, appears to me physically much miscast. As the unselfish sister Miss ANGELA

BADDELEY is excellent and so is young Mr. MICHAEL NEWELL as the cause of all the trouble. But the level is good throughout.

"THE NINETEENTH HOLE OF EUROPE" (GRANVILLE)

A group of tattered survivors of the final war is pictured by Mr. VIVIAN CONNELL as driven down to the sea by despair and starvation and plague, and cut off from the remaining civilizations by the *cordon sanitaire* with which the rest of the world has ruthlessly hedged in a rotting Europe. It includes a Danubian sort of king who plays



THE CAUSE OF ALL THE TROUBLE MARKED WITH +

Catherine Winslow	MISS ANGELA BADDELEY
Sir Robert Morton	MR. EMLYN WILLIAMS
Arthur Winslow	MR. FRANK CELLIER
Ronnie Winslow	MR. MICHAEL NEWELL

patience with the skull of his crown prince, his queen (at last in perspective as an honest trollop), a prince of the church who comes in for a sad basting but turns out, humbled by a dose of hooch, to be a decent fellow after all, a Hapsburg nanny, an international sportsman, a prostitute, and a soldier—the last of their kind, drowning their degradation in fire-water dispensed from the lee of a tommy-gun by the ultimate remnant of Big Business. Sanity is represented by a poet, a man of saint-like strength who lashes bitterly the masters who have let war lead to its logical (and presumably its atomic) conclusion; and when the party is joined by a young girl, dazed but spiritually intact, the author discovers

an ark in which these two can fly the common doom, and brings his curtain down on the conviction that it is love, and love only, that can bridge the future.

It is savage stuff. Mr. CONNELL hits out with a roughness which might be intolerable if it were not redeemed by hope. What he has to say is nearly always interesting. The play is a queer shape, long periods of static eloquence taking turns with wild explosions of passion and horror. But that it is the work of a poet and philosopher there can be no doubt. It is fairly well acted by a large cast, outstanding from which are Mr. ANDREW CRUICKSHANK as the Poet, a fine performance only marred by the way an excellent declamation occasionally fades out, and Miss ELLEN POLLOCK, whose Queen is rich in tragedy as well as comedy.

"GUEST IN THE HOUSE" (EMBASSY)

The shakiness of this play is gallantly obscured to some extent by crisp acting. A hypochondriac girl is invited to stay by hospitable relations, and within three months her malice, neurotic and without motive, all but breaks up their home. It is not with *Evelyn's* diseased mind that one quarrels, for Miss BETTY ANN DAVIES clearly demonstrates its distorted pattern, nor with *Stephen's* lapse of judgment, made plausible by Mr. ANTHONY IRELAND (and any column of divorce reports); nor yet with the background, observed with humour and reinforced by a

capital performance by Miss ADRIANNE ALLEN as *Stephen's* sensible wife. What one comes away muttering is that a guest, in whatever state of health, who so relentlessly played one gramophone record, insulted the cook and undermined the confidence of an only child would be slung out of any home, however charitable, in much less than three months without having to bother to add to her agenda the attempted seduction and frame-up of her host. Miss ELLIOT MASON provides the best of several lively sketches of character.

The piece has been adapted by Mr. EMLYN WILLIAMS from a play by Mr. HAGAR WILDE and Mr. DALE EUNSON. And wasn't there a film?

ERIC.

Reaction

EVEN in the days when I was a major I used not to be in favour of saluting. I accepted it. Because I had to do it I tried to do it thoroughly, and for that reason I suppose it did rather become a part of me. I understand that the subconscious mind takes these things over after a time, so that you can put on your left shoe first without thinking about it, or, as in my case, automatically start hunting for them both without looking in the correct place until all the incorrect places have been exhausted.

Certainly I missed it. I must admit that much. Especially on rounding a bend and coming face to face with a rank. Certain muscles used to twitch on those occasions, and one had to exert all one's powers of self-control.

It was not precisely for this reason, of course, that I joined the A.A. They give you a wonderful service, and you never know when you are going to need them. But I could not help thinking, as I tried to work out how to fix the badge on the radiator without entirely dismantling irrelevant parts of the engine, that it would be rather nice to be saluted again, and that the subscription was really quite reasonable if you took everything into account.

Naturally, I did not imagine for a moment that one would meet any patrols in the congested areas. I looked for them of course and once thought I was coming on one, but it turned out to be a window-cleaner clad in a yellow smock. It was not until I was well out of London on one of the arterial roads that my hopes began to soar. I do not think I imagined that I would meet them in droves or herds or whatever the collective noun is for A.A. patrols, but I was a little surprised not to come across one during the first thirty miles of lonely driving. Also, I was impressed by the extraordinary popularity of yellow smocks such as the window-cleaner had worn. Most motor-cyclists seemed to have them, and I conclude that these are manufactured from some sort of gasproof material that has been released by some sort of Ministry, unless it can be the waterproof designed for men leaving the Royal Navy.

It was as I reached the summit of a steep hill that I became aware of my first patrol in the distance. I did not realize, until I drew nearer, that he was extremely busy, but even so I rather hoped that he might look up, and I



"And what's more, after it's finished we're first in the queue for our 25 bus."

reduced my speed accordingly. However, it was of no avail, for when I passed him his head was buried in somebody's bonnet.

My next encounter was when I passed one travelling in the same direction. I thought he might have looked in his mirror at me, but apparently his mind was on other things, and I thought it would have been a little indiscreet if I had stopped and asked him why he had not saluted. The answer seemed to me to be so obvious.

However, the great moment came

at last, for I saw a very alert patrol cruising towards me with no possible excuse for not saluting. I therefore took my foot off the accelerator and stiffened slightly in my seat. He was well-schooled and very orthodox, favouring a wide sweep upwards from his handlebar, and I felt the old thrill running through me. In fact I was quite carried away for the moment, though I still cannot imagine how I came to hit a stationary postman's bicycle. I suppose I must have caught it with my near-side mudguard in the excitement.



"Well, if we hadn't already seen the end I never would have believed that it would have turned out to be that nice butler who was the murderer!"

Our Booking-Office (By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Art

ANY creative artist from Giotto to the village blacksmith could tell you, if he were articulate enough, that you must have art in life if you are to have life in art. The fact that quality cannot survive quantity, or art persist in the homes, streets and schools of to-day, emerges here and there in *The Arts Enquiry: The Visual Arts* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 10/6) produced by a Dartington Hall committee—a plucky if Partingtonian attempt to revive those indispensable tokens of civilization, painting and sculpture, by more State expenditure and more State control. "The demands of each age," as Flinders Petrie once remarked, "are its ideals." There is practically no demand for art in modern England, and no means of meeting it if there were—unless you except the decoration of communal kitchens by unpaid students. The demolition work of the book is admirably carried out—especially as regards existing art schools. It is even suggested that "practising artists" should be introduced, off and on, to teach in these mausoleums. But why not cut the State out altogether and revert, as Eric Gill and Professor Lethaby suggested, to a personal apprenticeship; or to the private teaching that kept the Norwich School alive; or to the continental students' atelier with its visiting maître? All have produced results.

H. P. E.

Tragedy in Two Generations

There is perhaps more artifice than art in *The Moonlight* (MICHAEL JOSEPH, 10/6). Ingeniously constructed and

unusually well-written, it seems to have been fitted together rather than to have grown. It is, however, a remarkable book, and if not inspired is also not commonplace. The author, Mr. JOYCE CARY, juxtaposes the histories of three sisters born in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century and a few months out of the life of Amanda, a woman in the early thirties just before the war. When the book opens, Amanda, who has intellectual interests, is living in seclusion with Aunt Ella; the centre of her life is her study, with its "white book-shelves, steel-framed chairs upholstered in earth-coloured corduroy, a typewriting table, with a typist's spring seat," a whole that contrasts strongly with the rest of the Victorian house. When the book closes, Amanda is in a London flat, expecting a child by a farmer whom she has decided not to marry. On her desk are files, docketed and ordered. "She had work to do, and her gestures as well as her face showed preparation for a long and troublesome task . . . But she was very tired, even more tired than usual, and so she hesitated to begin." In the course of the book she has discovered that she is the illegitimate child of Aunt Ella; for the underlying theme of the novel is the tragedy of life, and Aunt Ella and her sisters are no less its victims than Amanda.

H. K.

Save the Birds!

With food—or the lack of it—a momentous topic, we are beginning to take note of those who help to feed us and those who hinder that beneficent process. Among the former, says Mr. PERCIVAL STAPLES, are nearly all the British birds. Mr. STAPLES has invented a system of bird-marking for iniquity; and only the wood-pigeon gets 100 per cent. and he, after all, is very good eating himself. A couple of tits dispose of two million caterpillars and grubs a year; but one gathers that the author has not watched a tit tap at a beehive door and eat the bee who answers it. The tiresome sparrow is, in town, a scavenger. The Bolshevik starling, complete with communal roost, has his good points on arable. Only the cuckoo will eat furry caterpillars. Every tawny owl is worth a sack of grain. So it does look as though we were improvident in losing our unparalleled birds to dormitory suburbs, large-scale farming, telegraph wires, cars and conifer-planting. The writer of *Birds in a Garden Sanctuary* (WARNE, 12/6) pleads for more such havens and gives admirable accounts of his own processes and other people's. Undoubtedly a public-spirited and delightful pastime, his method seems a sadly artificial way of regaining what nature has given us for nothing.

H. P. E.

The Portsmouth Letters

Admiral Sir W. M. JAMES was Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, until the autumn of 1942, and in the later stages of the war M.P. for Portsmouth North. In order to preserve some record both of his own work and of the general progress of events, he decided in the first week of the war to write to a naval friend at frequent intervals, and the result is *The Portsmouth Letters* (MACMILLAN, 10/6). It is a great relief to come across a war book the author of which does not dramatize himself. There is nothing melodramatic about this straightforward running commentary, but it is always shrewd and to the point, and is the kind of contribution to the history of the last war which will be increasingly valued as the events of which it treats fall into their true perspective. As early as October 1939 he wrote "I am beginning to wonder if the French will fight when Hitler turns on them." He had already foreseen that the Balkan States would have to come in on the side of the Germans, and in February 1940 lamented

that we should be sending M.T.B.s to Roumania—"These piffling little bribees will be of little use when the Germans appear on the Roumanian frontier." The author takes us right through the war, and lightens his record with many good stories; this one, for example, about his hero, Mr. Churchill, who on being asked if he would have tea replied—"My doctor has ordered me to take nothing non-alcoholic between breakfast and dinner."

H. K.

Countryman's Outings

There are few pleasanter things than to go wandering with "B.B." through the countryside, whether armed with a rod, a gun, or simply a telescope and an inquiring mind. He seems where birds and beasts are concerned to be endowed with an extra sense, and his writing has a lively power of description and the charm of modesty. *The Wayfaring Tree* (HOLLIS AND CARTER, 12/6) ranges from the New Forest to Scotland, and is delightfully illustrated by D. J. Watkins-Pitchford. It includes a dissertation on the most typical English rural smells, at the top of which he puts hawthorn, bruised nettle, elder and lime, and it suggests that the national war memorial should be a Wood of Remembrance with an oak each for everyone who fell in battle. The Oleander and the Spurge—how did such a noble coupling escape Lewis Carroll?—are his favourite moths; and he tells us how from Wicken Fen, where he also found his first greater bladderwort, he took caterpillars of the Swallow Tail with which he tried hard but unsuccessfully to found a colony in the Midlands. There is a fine portrait of an old signalman who coached him in sport when a boy, a mighty hunter after tench, using tackle of crane-like proportions, and a great slayer of pigeon, for which he crouched patiently in his hide until assured of what he called "a family shot." But "B.B.'s" real love is for wildfowling, and on the long trail of the grey goose he grows lyrical. It is certainly a bleak and arduous game, but he is overdoing its rigours when he says the wildfowler must be content to fast from dawn to dark. For sandwiches and a flask suit the mudflats well.

E. O. D. K.

Studies in Ballet

In CYRIL W. BEAUMONT's latest book, *The Sadler's Wells Ballet* (BEAUMONT, 21/-), the ballet-goer will find a well-illustrated guide to the appreciation of thirty ballets in the current repertoire. It is intended for those who desire to know more about the ballets they see than the programme can tell them, and it fills its purpose excellently. It does not aim at being an exhaustive account of all the Wells productions, not even of those of recent years—there is no mention, for instance, of *The Birds*, Helpmann's amusing trifle with a setting by Chiang Yee—but it gives interesting descriptions of all the principal works, classic and modern, in the repertoire, with an account of their historical background and a spicie of shrewd criticism. It describes the action of the ballets in sufficient detail to enable those who have seen them in the theatre to see them again on the stage of memory, and to marvel in passing at the good fortune of the Wells in its choreographers—Ninette de Valois, who can create a work of such power and dignity as *Job*; Frederick Ashton, whose invention has such unfailing fluency, grace and charm; and Robert Helpmann, with his dramatic gifts and the mastery of the free Central European style that he displayed in *Hamlet*.

D. C. B.

Neptune's Daughters

Among the women's services the Wrens, to judge from the cordiality of their reception when they make their

public appearances, seem to enjoy a rather special place in the popular regard—a fact due in part, no doubt, to the excellence of their publicity department, in part to the reflected glory of the Senior Service, but very largely and deservedly to the scope and usefulness of their work. Miss EILEEN BIGLAND, who writes *The Story of the W.R.N.S.* (NICHOLSON AND WATSON, 8/6), rather obviously with official blessing, is plainly out to give them a really whole-hearted boost; but it is doubtful whether her mood of indiscriminate and rather cloying eulogy is really that best calculated to give a true picture of the Wrens' contribution to the war effort. Miss BIGLAND has seen something of most aspects of the Wrens' work, and writes of them interestingly and amusingly; but to paint their life as something like that of a high-class boarding-school, and to ignore the real sacrifices their service so often entailed, and above all the inevitable tragedy of the square peg in the round hole, is frankly absurd.

C. F. S.

Magic Casements

Mr. CHARLES NORDHOFF and Mr. JAMES NORMAN HALL have collaborated in *The High Barbaree* (FABER, 7/6) to give us a book which is itself a collaboration between starkest reality and highest romance. The story begins grimly when two young officers, survivors of the crew of a crippled Catalina, in which they have made forced landing in the Pacific, are waiting for rescue or for death by starvation. They manage to catch a frigate bird, bind a message to its leg and add a blue cloth streamer to make it conspicuous. From this moment and up to the very last chapter the tune of the book changes, because young Vail begins to entertain his companion with tales of his own and a sea-faring uncle's belief in an uncharted Pacific island and to describe a recurrent dream connected with its discovery. The book is difficult to describe, partly because of the air of magic that pervades the story and partly because it would be unfair to readers and authors to give any idea of the startling conclusion. It is full of comfort, excitement and beauty, combines the quality of "perilous seas and faery lands forlorn," and for these reasons as well as for the skilled plot is one of the most satisfactory books that has been published lately.

B. E. B.



"You and your perishin' slow oven—we're nearly an hour late already."

Labour Notes

PEOPLE who live in towns still cling to the belief that country life makes so few demands on the mind that it quickly atrophies. Nothing could be further from the truth. To survive for ten minutes in the country you have to think with the alacrity of a bookmaker and the subtlety of a Loyola. To relax is fatal. When I was told that a man in a motor-car wished to speak to me my mind was admittedly in neutral. I was eating a boiled egg.

"I'm from the R.D.C." said the man. "That's a dangerous corner you've got where the lane bends round your paddock."

"Dangerous?" I exclaimed. "That great thorn-bush makes it a death-trap."

"It makes the corner blind both ways, and that's bad."

"Bad? I was about to write a strong letter to the council," I said. "The bush should never have been left to get so out of hand."

"Ah," said the man.

"Naturally during the war one made allowances, but now there's no excuse whatever."

"None," the man agreed.

"As a matter of fact to make the corner absolutely safe the whole bush should come down."

"I'm glad you feel like that, sir, because that's just what the council thinks."

"Splendid," I said.

"If you could fix it fairly soon we'd be very much obliged."

Please see Paragraph One.

"I fix it?"

"It's your pigeon, I'm afraid, sir."

"But it's outside my land."

"It's on your side of the lane. You

could apply for a German prisoner." The man was already in his car again.

"Who knows the German for thorn-bush?" I cried helplessly, but by then he had gone.

I walked along and took a look at the thing. Nature had not been sparing of her juices. It would have cleared the deck at any thorn-bush show in the country. Everything about it was O.S. and the thorns were like young ploughshares. Where over the years it had laced itself into my fence a bramble of tropical extravagance had married with it and now it was difficult to say which was which. Not that normally I should have had any wish to, but a lorry full of land-girls whizzing round the corner made me jump and for the first time I felt a growing animosity towards this bush. I flirted for a moment with the idea of a bucket of paraffin and a match, but it broke down on both the bucket of paraffin and the match. I therefore got out a wheelbarrow and filled it with the most brutal-looking tools I could find.

The thorn-bush reduced a pair of heavy shears to the stature of nail-scissors. I changed to a murderous billhook and with that succeeded in blasting a few of the outer defences at the cost of a fine straight furrow in my hand. The trouble with a billhook is you have to swing. Whatever I swing, whether it is "Annie Laurie" or a cat, my long apprenticeship in the bunkers of the world is too strong for me and I am obliged to follow through. For sheer fluid beauty my follow-through has been well compared with Debussy at his most *englouti*. So I followed through with the billhook into my left shin. It made a considerable mess and

any coolness which survived in my attitude towards the thorn-bush disappeared. I spat on my hands and put the old interlocking grip on to a large chopper, the kind of weapon with which butchers chip a path through a frozen bullock. Butchers must be fitter than they look, for after I had plied it for some minutes much the same aggregate of bush remained, but I could feel the ergs and calories leaving my sinking body in great numbers. Now an unhappy stroke freed a huge coil of bramble like the mainspring of Big Ben so that it flew out and wound itself many times round my neck. The chopper described a leisurely parabola before shattering a frame full of young cos, and for my part I was content for a while to describe the chopper. I tasted the frenzy of a man trapped in the jungle, and my appearance must have fitted it well. I began to swing a vast axe . . .

"Haven't seen a feller working like that for years."

"But he looks a very rough type, George."

"Rough type be damned, Emily. These are rough days. I say, my man!"

An imposing couple was observing me haughtily from the verge.

"You seem to be prepared to work," George went on masterfully. "I might consider employing a chap like you."

I wiped some blood off my nose.

"Well? What have you got to say for yourself?"

I was too weak to say much, but it was a Tolpuddle moment.

"I might possibly spare you a half-day about 1951," I said, "if your references prove satisfactory. But you will have to discuss terms with my agents."

ERIC.



"Good! The table's vacant."

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PUNCH

Or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCX No. 5502

June 12 1946

Charivaria

A READER assures us that her infant's only reaction on seeing the local peace procession was to remark that the queue was being served awfully quickly.

A land girl is to marry a farmer weighing nineteen stone. It is understood that the rest of the Land Army is demanding a rather less substantial gratuity.



"EVENTFUL DAY IN BOMBAY PASSES OFF WITHOUT EVENTS"
Bombay paper.

One dam - nothing after another.

The service of an Australian tennis-player is unusual in that he strikes the ball on the upward throw. If he misses it, the theory of Sir Isaac Newton is again confirmed.

A number of ex-A.R.P. wardens are to be trained as traffic policemen. They are keen to resume their old job of advising people about their lights.

An Austrian professor can make synthetic meat from wood. It is self-skewering.

The Government lost no time in appointing a successor to Sir Ben Smith. We understand there was only a small queue.

Bouquets All Round

"Nevertheless, one is amazed that the powers that be offer no inducements to the private builder to add his quota to the shameful lack of foresight exhibited for so long in regard to the housing problem all over the country." —*Glamorgan paper.*



London detectives engaged in anti-black-market operations are said to pose as smart young men-about-town. We remember the type; they used to sell cars at the motor show.

A dog-breeder says that a fox-terrier of championship standard may fetch as much as £1,800. But of course, he adds, you have to take the rough with the smooth.

"FOR SALE, 2 Goats in kid, due for a good time."
Advt. in "Wakefield Express."
And liable to be disappointed, like all the rest of us.

We understand that picnic parties are so few and far between in these days of petrol rationing that mosquitoes are having to employ pathfinders before making their attacks.



The Man with the Pipe

The two sisters Nina and Masha are seen sitting by an open window at Gdansk on a wet day. There is a samovar on the table beside them, and outside the sodden lawn is covered with weeds. There is a sound of waves and falling fruit.

NINA. I have an irresistible desire to dance and sing. Everything is so beautiful, the sky, the trees, the flowers. Why am I so happy to-day? Even the rain is beautiful. It falls on the ground and wets the flowers and the grass, and the drops tremble on the leaves as though they were jewels. When everything is blotted out by the rain I am so happy that I almost wish I were dead.

MASHA. I always wish I were dead, Ninuska. What is the use of living? For many people have done that already, and where are they now? But I want to go to Berlin. I want to go to Teheran. I want to go to Sofia. I want excitement before I die, and everything is so dull here. Have some tea. Did you know that the Commissar is coming to-day, Ninuska?

NINA. The Commissar?

MASHA. Yes, Nicolai Pipitkin. I have always thought that you should marry Nicoluski, Ninuska. He has a thousand silk stockings which he found in Vienna. He has two hundred watches which he discovered in Warsaw. He would make you very happy. Hush, there is grandfather.

NINA. Is he drunk to-day?

MASHA. No, he stopped being drunk yesterday. He has bought a steam tractor. He is going to plough up the poppy field and sow it with sunflower seeds. He says that without a steam tractor life is petty and insignificant, but with a steam tractor the world is radiant and lovely, and nothing matters any more.

Enter ANDREI SOLEOVSKOVITCH, slapping his chest.

ANDREI. Ho, ho, ho, ho. Ho, ho, ho, ho. How happy I am. Before I understood how to start Katinka, my new steam tractor, I was the most miserable man on earth. What are you two girls doing here? Why are you so idle? I have brought Deputy Pipitkin with me. He wishes to speak to you alone, Mashuska. Come out into the garden with me, Mashuska, for a few minutes. I am going to shoot sea-gulls in the cherry orchard until it is time for dinner.

Enter PIPITKIN as they go out. He is smoking a large birch-wood pipe which he never removes from his lips when he speaks.

PIPITKIN. I love you, Nina. Can you possibly find it in your heart to love me?

NINA. I do not love anybody, Commissar. I shall never love anything except the flowers, the trees, the birds, the sky, the hills, and the rain.

PIPITKIN. Terrible! Terrible! Have you ever thought that in a thousand years we shall all be dead? I am the Chief Overseer of a Communal Farm, but in a thousand years somebody else will be the Chief Overseer. If you married me to-morrow you would be the Chief Overseeress. We could spend our honeymoon in Mongolia, Lithuania, Persia, Bulgaria, or anywhere you please. I could take you to Helsinki on my bulldozer. I could buy you carpets at Tabriz. We could climb in the Caucasus together and gather vultures' eggs. The whole world would be ours.

NINA. I am sorry, Nicolai, but it is quite impossible. I shall never marry. Have you thought how many million people in the world have married, and that every marriage is the same? Did I hear a shot in the garden?

PIPITKIN. It is only Andrei. Do you realize, Nina, that your grandfather does not really possess the steam tractor? He has mortgaged the orchard in order to receive the loan of the tractor from the State. If you do not marry me the tractor will be taken away from him.

NINA. Leave me for a few moments, Nicolai. I wish to think.

[Exit. PIPITKIN, smoking hard

Oh, I am so miserable. The sky has become ugly, the trees are not green, the flowers have ceased to grow, even the rain is no longer wet . . .

That is as far as I have got with my new Russian play, and I should be very glad if someone would go on with it for me. Nothing would sadden me more than the feeling that the fine old school of Russian playwriting must fade out merely because the political situation of Europe has changed a little in the last forty years or so. One can perceive that almost anything might happen in this little drama of mine. In aiming at a sea-gull or a cherry-tree Andrei Soleovskovitch might hit Mashuska by mistake. Or in teaching her how to work the steam tractor he might get her mixed up with the machinery. Or a regiment of artillery might arrive. Or fourteen new characters might come in looking for a dredger or a snow-plough. Or Pipitkin might foreclose on the orchard and carry off Masha to see the new Russian world, leaving Nina and old Andrei destitute in a potting-shed, in which case old Andrei would take to drink again, feeling that life had now become petty and insignificant once more, while Nina gradually began to perceive that, in spite of human unhappiness, the grass was still green, that birds were continuing to fly, and that nothing in mortal life could really prevent the rain from being damp. They might perhaps keep a single wounded sea-gull in a cage and feed it on cherries together, or they might commit suicide, one just before and one just after the curtain falls.

There are infinite possibilities of amusement. But it needs a very good actor to play the part of Pipitkin, who, as I said before, speaks all his lines without taking his pipe out of his mouth. A large pipe. This is the real *clef* of the playlet. Put a pencil in your mouth and try over the single sentence, "We could climb the Caucasus together, and gather vultures' eggs," and you will clearly understand.

EVOE.

○ ○

Power-of-the-Press Corner

"RIVER DART TRIP."

SATURDAY, 18TH MAY, 1946.

Owing to a misprint in the Time-Tables, the 1 P.M. SERVICE from Dartmouth WILL NOT RUN."—Advt. in West Country paper.

○ ○

Bombay Duck

"... Much more than a fairy story, this is suggestive of crime fiction where in the end truth and justice prevail and the criminals stand hoist with their own canard."—Bombay paper.



AMONG THOSE ABSENT

Labour Notes

PEOPLE who live in towns still cling to the belief that country life makes so few demands on the mind that it quickly atrophies. Nothing could be further from the truth. To survive for ten minutes in the country you have to think with the alacrity of a bookmaker and the subtlety of a Loyola. To relax is fatal. When I was told that a man in a motor-car wished to speak to me my mind was admittedly in neutral. I was eating a boiled egg.

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I walked along and took a look at the thing. Nature had not been sparing of her juices. It would have cleared the deck at any thorn-bush show in the country. Everything about it was O.S. and the thorns were like young ploughshares. Where over the years it had laced itself into my fence a bramble of tropical extravagance had married with it and now it was difficult to say which was which. Not that normally I should have had any wish to, but a lorry full of land-girls whizzing round the corner made me jump and for the first time I felt a growing animosity towards this bush. I flirted for a moment with the idea of a bucket of paraffin and a match, but it broke down on both the bucket of paraffin and the match. I therefore got out a wheelbarrow and filled it with the most brutal-looking tools I could find.

The thorn-bush reduced a pair of heavy shears to the stature of nail-scissors. I changed to a murderous billhook and with that succeeded in blasting a few of the outer defences at the cost of a fine straight furrow in my hand. The trouble with a billhook is you have to swing. Whatever I swing, whether it is "Annie Laurie" or a cat, my long apprenticeship in the bunkers of the world is too strong for me and I am obliged to follow through. For sheer fluid beauty my follow-through has been well compared with Debussy at his most *englouti*. So I followed through with the billhook into my left shin. It made a considerable mess and

any coolness which survived in my attitude towards the thorn-bush disappeared. I spat on my hands and put the old interlocking grip on to a large chopper, the kind of weapon with which butchers chip a path through a frozen bullock. Butchers must be fitter than they look, for after I had plied it for some minutes much the same aggregate of bush remained, but I could feel the ergs and calories leaving my sinking body in great numbers. Now an unhappy stroke freed a huge coil of bramble like the mainspring of Big Ben so that it flew out and wound itself many times round my neck. The chopper described a leisurely parabola before shattering a frame full of young cos, and for my part I was content for a while to describe the chopper. I tasted the frenzy of a man trapped in the jungle, and my appearance must have fitted it well. I began to swing a vast axe . . .

"Haven't seen a feller working like that for years."

"But he looks a very rough type, George."

"Rough type be damned, Emily. These are rough days. I say, my man!"

An imposing couple was observing me haughtily from the verge.

"You seem to be prepared to work," George went on masterfully. "I might consider employing a chap like you."

I wiped some blood off my nose.

"Well? What have you got to say for yourself?"

I was too weak to say much, but it was a Tolpuddle moment.

"I might possibly spare you a half-day about 1951," I said, "if your references prove satisfactory. But you will have to discuss terms with my agents."

ERIC.



"Good! The table's vacant."

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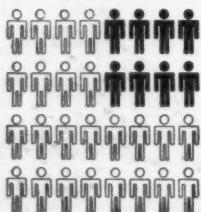


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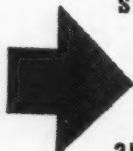


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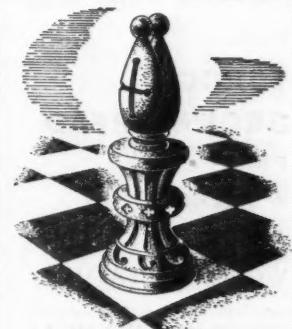
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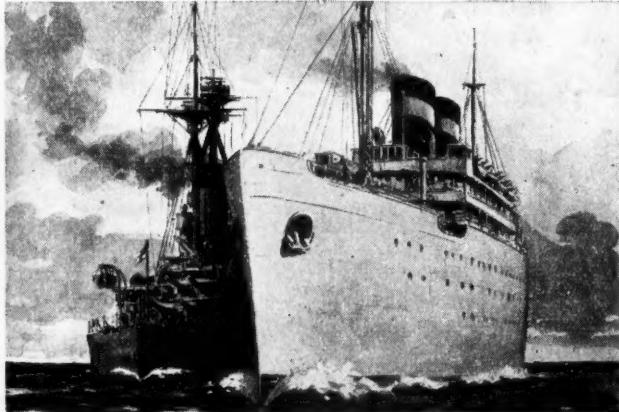
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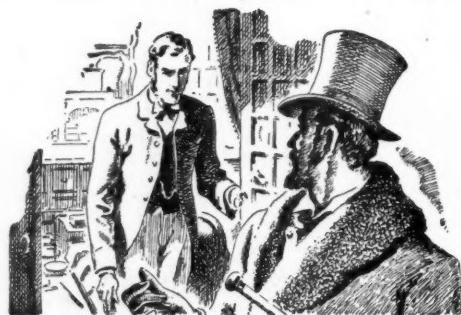


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